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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

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Keith Wiley's garden at Wildside

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Editor's letter

Wildside, the garden of pioneering plantsman Keith Wiley, is the most exciting and innovative garden in Britain today. Designer, gardener and builder, Keith has created Wildside from the land by his own hand, carving pools and canyons to make spaces inspired by the natural landscape. Broadleaf trees with repeating forms, such as magnolias, apples and acers, thread parts of Wildside together underplanted with perennials, there are pine and birch trees on higher ground and lower, open areas with hummocky grasses punctuated with vibrant colour. Wildside takes its cue from the plant communities that Keith has visited worldwide and modified to make a garden, with energy and originality at the fore.

At the cutting edge of design, gardens are becoming increasingly understated and less garden-like. In US architecture there is a vogue for modernist houses that play on the concept of barns and other farm buildings, with gardens that blur the boundaries between a house and its setting, to the point that there appears to be almost no garden there at all. In this issue, design critic Tim Richardson visits an ultra-naturalistic garden designed by San Francisco-based garden designer Ron Lutsko in California's Portola Valley.

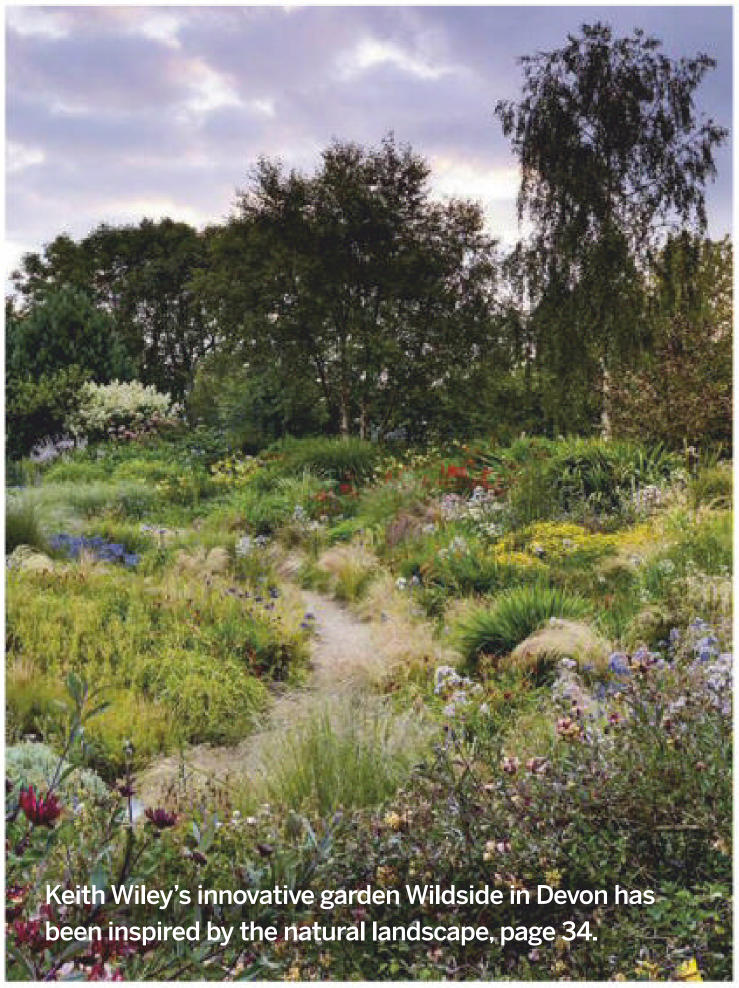
Formerly the head gardener at Soho House and Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Anna Greenland is an expert kitchen gardener. Her own small garden in Oxford is an extension of her kitchen, and in it she grows lots of delicious things to eat and cook. With an emphasis on productivity and flavour, think sherberty lemon verbena leaves, menthol-flavoured English mace flowers, the sweetest outdoor tomatoes and the nuttiest, most flavoursome squash.

Anna recommends her favourite varieties to grow from seed, for keen gardener-cooks, accompanied by plentiful tasting notes.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR



JASON INGRAM

Keith Wiley's innovative garden Wildside in Devon has been inspired by the natural landscape, page 34.

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CLAIRE TAKACS

Helianthus annus 'Red Sun', *Calendula officinalis* 'Indian Prince' and *Coreopsis lanceolata* 'Sterntala' combine in Gordon Castle's eight-acre walled garden, page 52.

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Dierama Wildside hybrids by Jason Ingram

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Contributors

Tim Richardson
Tim visits a garden in California, page 74. *"It was great to visit this Ron Lutsko garden. He's such an interesting designer – a plantsman, with a grounding in mid-century modernist style."*

Helen Picton
Helen, chooses some of the best small-flowered asters for autumn colour, page 44. *"It's incredible the late season beauty that can be created using small flowered asters in the garden."*

Andrew Montgomery
Andrew photographs JamJar's pressed flowers, page 68. *"Amy and Melissa create such beautiful pieces that you end up seeing ordinary garden flowers in a whole new light."*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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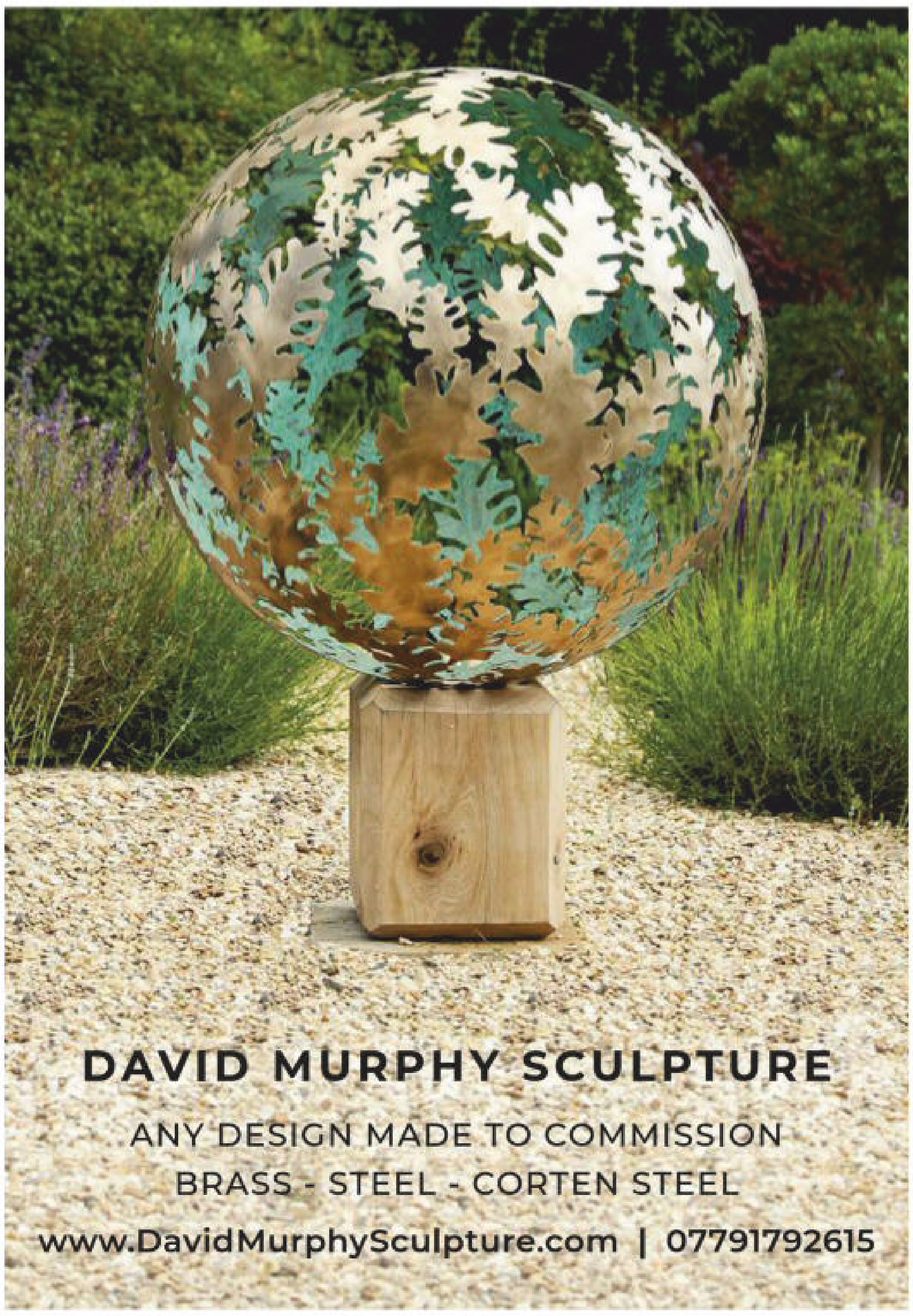
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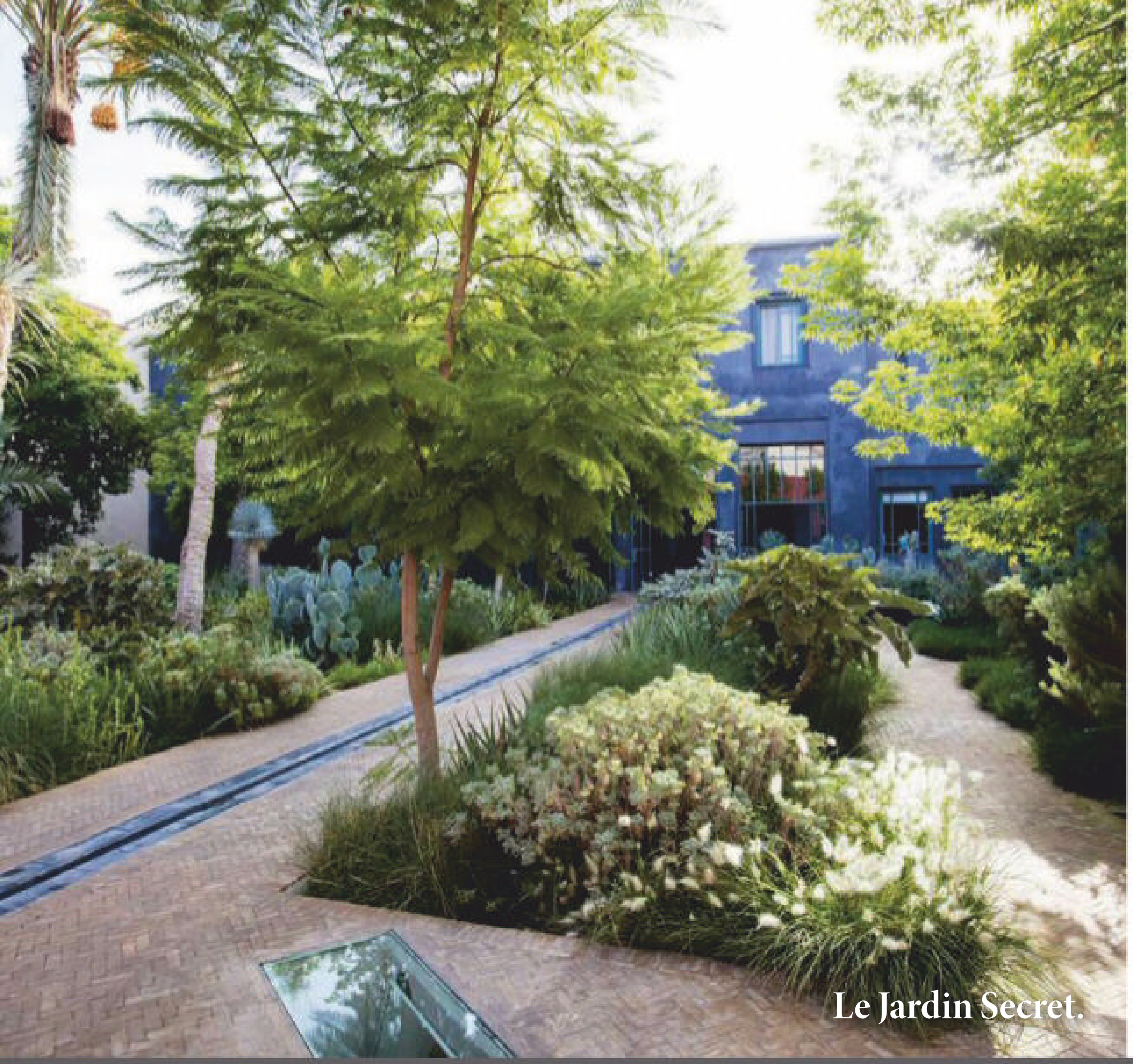
Le Jardin Secret.

Jardin Majorelle.

28 MARCH – 2 APRIL 2020

GARDENS OF MARRAKECH & TAROUDANT

Join Kirsty Fergusson, with special guest host, award-winning designer Tom Stuart-Smith, to explore the wonders of Morocco's contemporary gardens.

TOUR LEADER

Kirsty Fergusson exchanged a career in academia as a specialist in French philosopher-novelists for a life in gardening. She trained at Capel Manor and was head gardener at Mapperton in Dorset during the early 1990s. She now lives in France, writing regularly about gardens for various publications and leading tours.

This special Moroccan garden tour offers a unique selection of 21st-century, mostly private gardens, designed by some of our best-known designers. Tom Stuart-Smith will join the group for two days to guide you through his own creation, **Le Jardin Secret** in the heart of Marrakech, while in the city of Taroudant on the southern edge of the Atlas mountains, we visit a series of remarkable gardens designed by Eric Ossart and Arnaud Maurières, two French globetrotting botanists, plant hunters and renowned garden designers. A further highlight will be a day of all things Yves Saint Laurent, including a visit to the new YSL museum, a tour of **Jardin Majorelle**, and a private view of the garden of the adjacent **Villa Oasis**, where Yves Saint Laurent lived during his time in Morocco.

In a picture-book setting with views of the High Atlas Mountains, wonderful climate and cuisine, and great shopping, visitors will discover two warm and friendly cities steeped in history. We stay at two remarkable, small hotels: guest house **Jnane Tamsna**, surrounded by its own botanically rich and fascinating garden in an oasis setting, and **Dar al Hossoun** in the ancient city of Taroudant, an eco-friendly *riad* surrounding courtyards planted with many fascinating plant species.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing, is £3,898 (single supplement of £350 levied by hotels).

The price includes: bed-and-breakfast accommodation at Jnane Tamsna and Dar al Hossoun; five evening meals with wine plus five lunches; return flights from London Heathrow; and all transportation and visits in Morocco. The price does not include extras at the hotels or travel insurance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT

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DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

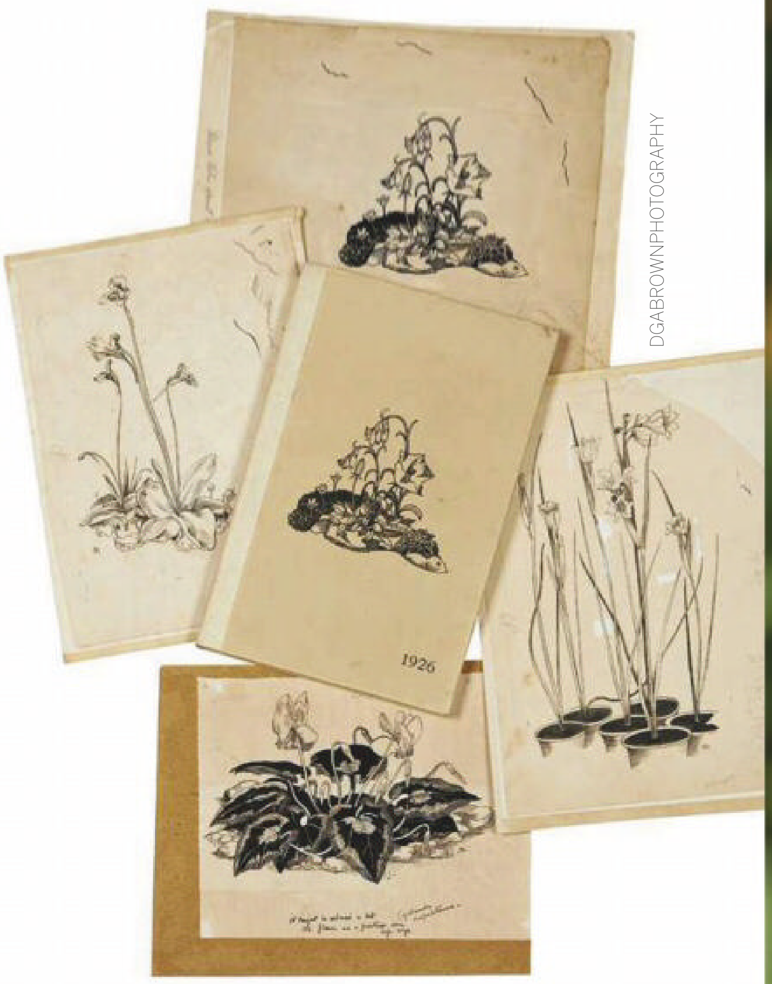
JAMES DOBSON / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

Tapping into the green pound

It's probably no surprise to discover that world-famous gardens such as the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and Sissinghurst (above) are high on the visit list of many of those holidaying in the UK. Garden tourism generates almost £3 billion of UK GDP, but according to a new report from the Government's Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, this is a fraction of what could be achieved with a more co-ordinated approach to garden tourism. One of the Committee's recommendations is the creation of a new UK Garden City competition, similar to the UK City of Culture, that would help to promote the cultural and economic contribution of the garden sector, through a year-long programme of events. It's also hoped that such a scheme would help raise the status of gardening in the UK, which despite the international reputation of many of the UK's leading garden designers, is still more often seen as a hobby or manual labour than a creative career path.

News

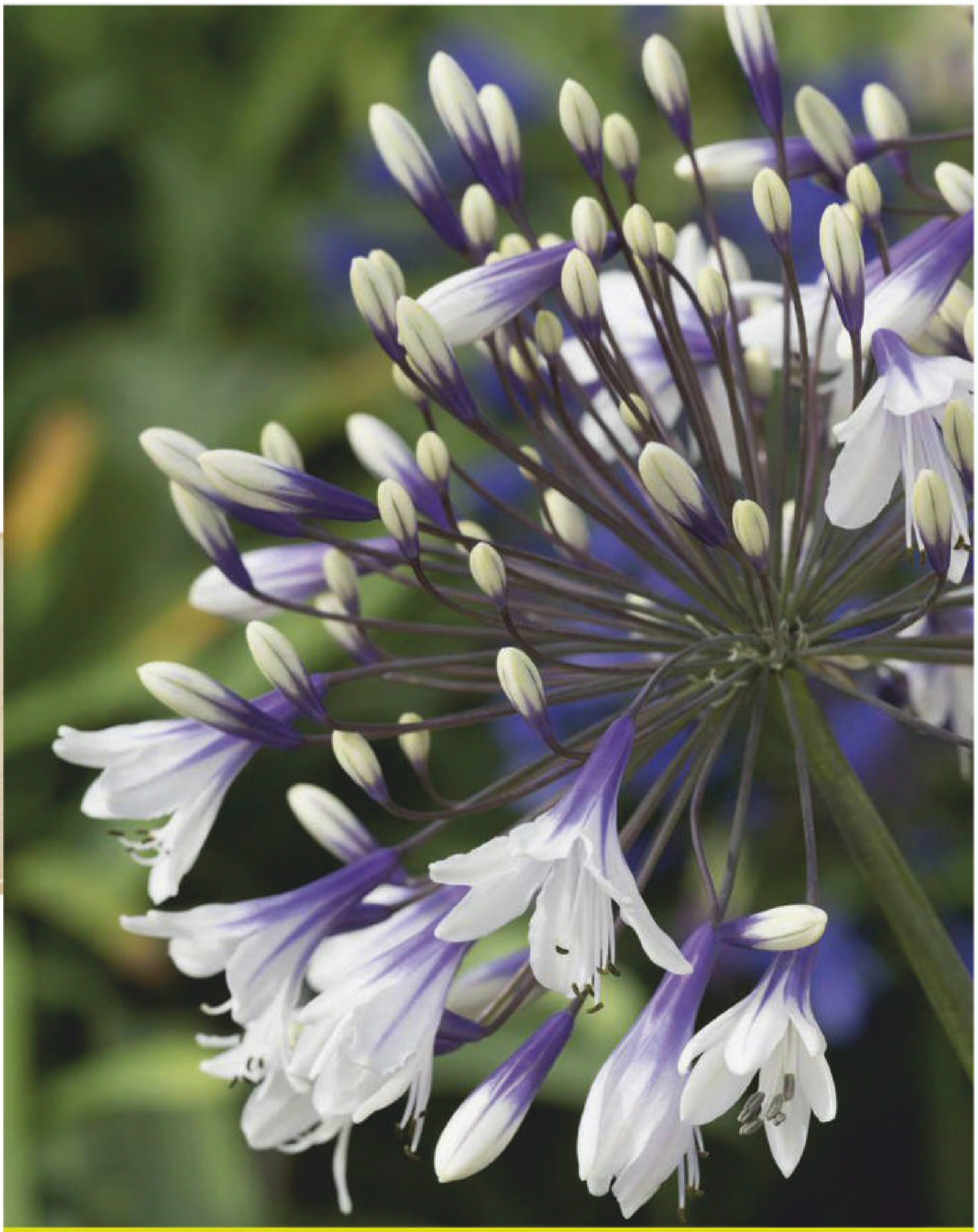
COMPILED BY **JULIET GILES**



DGABROWNPHOTOGRAPHY

EXPERT EYE

Although best known for his landscapes, John Nash was also an accomplished botanical artist, who illustrated the nursery catalogues of his friend the plantsman Clarence Elliott. This month you can see some of his illustrations, from the private collection of Martin Elliott, Clarence's grandson, in an exhibition The Artist & The Plantsman *at the Sam Wilson shop in Stow-on-the-Wold. It's one of the highlights of Stow Arts Week with events across the Cotswold town. 28 September – 6 October.* ***stowartweek.com***



Bright spark

All summer *Agapanthus* Fireworks (= 'Mdb001') has been turning heads, coming a strong third in the RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year competition and wining Best New Plant at the HTA National Plant Show. The eye-catching agapanthus has exotic-looking, two-tone flowers that don't fade in colour and keep blooming long after other agapanthus are finished – often well into September. It's also hardy to -10°C and looks equally fabulous planted in drifts in a border or in a pot on a terrace. Available from Thompson & Morgan now for spring delivery, from £9.99. **thompson-morgan.com**

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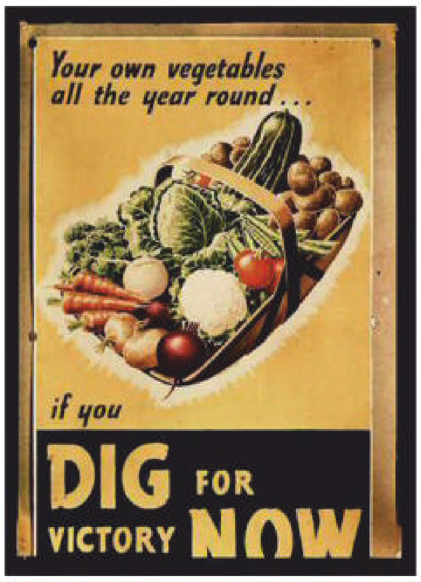

Unearthing memories

In October 1939 the Ministry of Agriculture launched its Dig for Victory campaign, which saw domestic gardens, public parks, school playing fields and even Oxford college lawns turned into allotments to support the war effort. Much of the campaign's success was thanks to the Royal Horticultural Society's role in teaching men and women across the country how to grow vegetables year round, and this month the RHS is marking the campaign's 80th anniversary with a series of exhibitions. On display will be photographs and other memorabilia sent into the RHS in response to its public appeal for wartime gardening memories. Dig for Victory is on display at RHS Lindley Library until 15 November, and at all RHS Gardens until 17 November. **rhs.org.uk**

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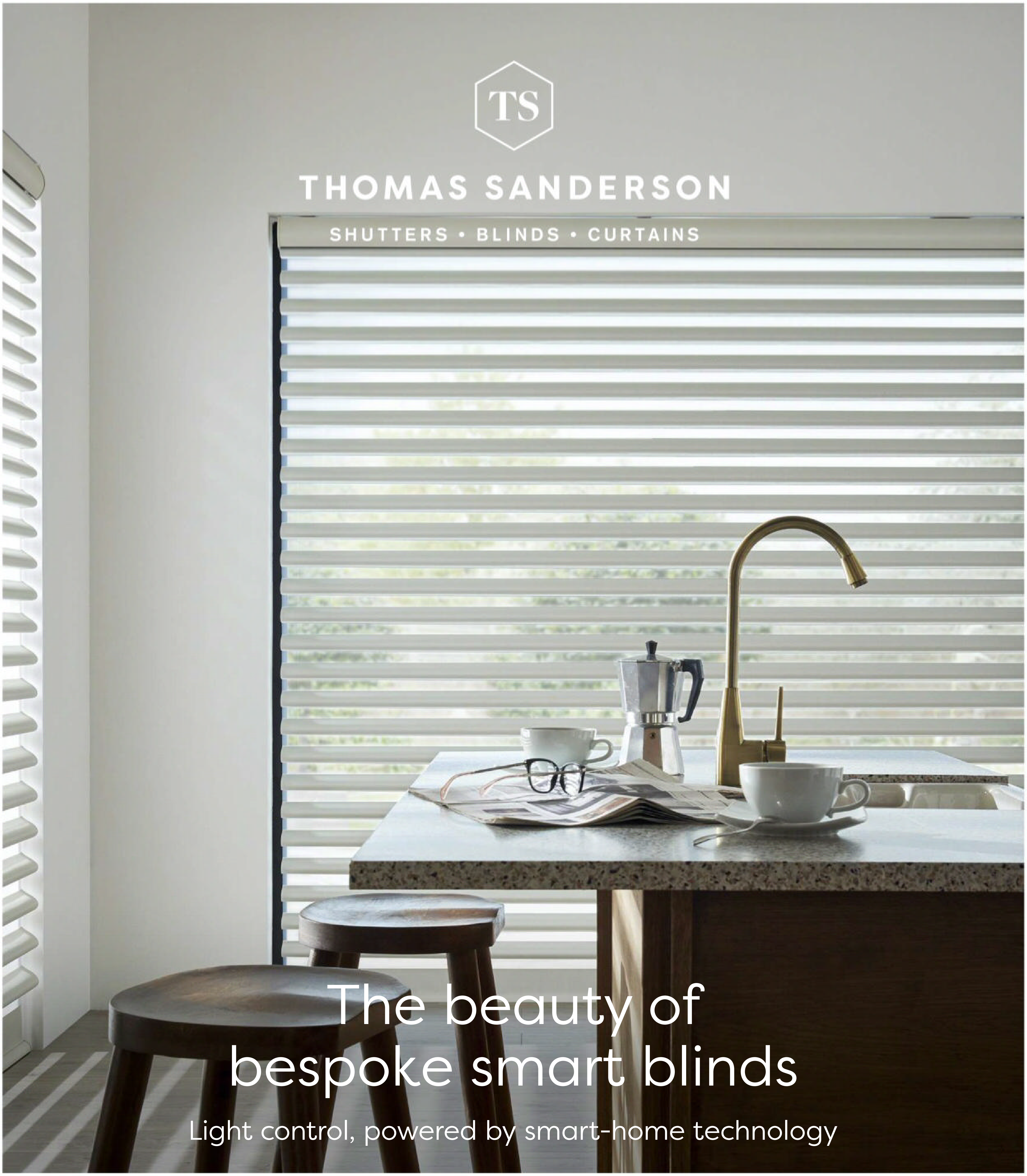
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MARK SPENCER

Clear advantage

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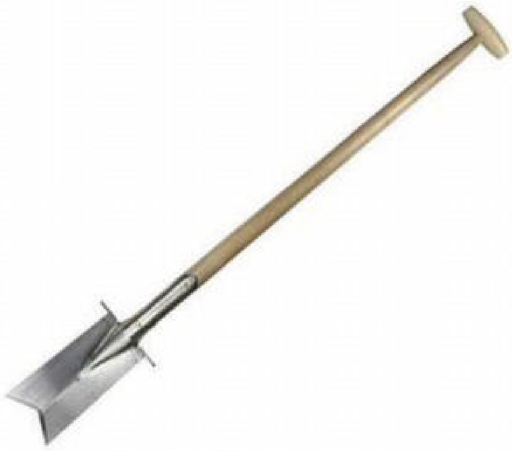
Investing in the future

The RHS has launched a public appeal to help raise the final £4.8 million needed to complete its fifth garden at RHS Bridgwater near Salford. Part of the funding will go towards creating a 'mother orchard' for northwest England to help to preserve rare apple cultivars, such as 'Florence Bennett' saved from a Liverpool rubbish heap, for future generations. Find out how to donate at **rhs.org.uk**

GROWN-UP GOURDS

Inject some autumnal style into your home with these pumpkins from Nordic House. Made from concrete, they're equally suited for indoors and out, and are a sophisticated twist on Halloween decorations. £15 a pair. nordichouse.co.uk

3 FOR THE GARDEN… SPADES FOR AUTUMN PLANTING



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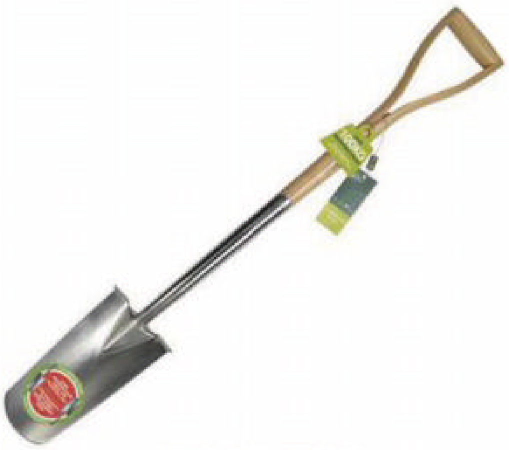

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Transplanting Spade

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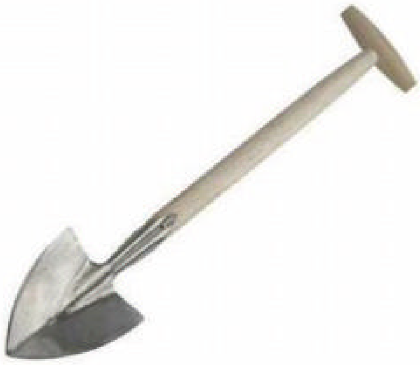
crocus.co.uk



SHORT HANDLED

Great Dixter Panting Spade

£54.95, Harrod Horticultural

harrodhorticultural.com

DIARY

COMPILED BY JULIET GILES AND ANNIE GATTI

❶ **Cheltenham Literature Festival**
Among the garden-related speakers at this year's Cheltenham Literature Festival, are nature writer Emma Mitchell (pictured), discussing her new book on the nature's health benefits and Jackie Bennett on the gardens that inspired history's greatest painters. cheltenhamfestivals.com

❷ **Tranquillity Haven**
Don't miss the chance to visit this Japanese Stroll Garden when it opens for the NGS this month. Tranquillity Haven, Lords Land, Whitton, Knighton, Powys LD7 1NJ. 5 October, 2pm-5pm. £4. Tel 01547 560070, ngs.org.uk

❸ **Great Dixter Autumn Plant Fair**
Browse some of Europe's best specialist nurseries, in the beautiful surroundings of Great Dixter. 5-6 October, 11am-4pm. £10. Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 252878, greatdixter.co.uk

❹ **Wood Fest RHS Wisley**
Learn more about traditional woodworking skills in a weekend celebration at RHS Garden Wisley. 5-6 October, 9am-5pm, admission included in garden entry. Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 224234, rhs.org.uk

❺ **Utopian Gardens**
In the first of a new lecture series exploring the links between gardens and utopias, Jim Endersby, reader in the history of science at the University of Sussex, looks at Francis Bacon's ideas on experimental gardens. 7 October, 6pm. Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1N 2HH. gresham.ac.uk

❻ **Grow Your Own Cut Flowers**
Learn how to design and manage your own cut flower garden on this one-day course with Land Gardeners Henrietta Courtauld and Bridget Elworthy at Wardington Manor. 10 October, 10.30am-3pm. £245. Wardington Manor, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX17 1SW. thelandgardeners.com

❼ **Botanical Illustration Workshop**
Artist Bridget Gillespie leads a botanical illustration workshop that concentrates on often unobserved plant features. 9-11 October, 10am-4pm. £180. The Himalayan Garden & Sculpture Park, The Hutts, Grewelthorpe, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3DA. Tel 01765 658009, himalayangarden.com

❽ **Heligan Harvest Event**
Learn about onion stringing and pick up great gardening tips at this annual celebration. 5-13 October, 10am-5pm. £15. The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Pentewan, Saint Austell, Cornwall PL26 6EN. Tel 01726 845100, heligan.com

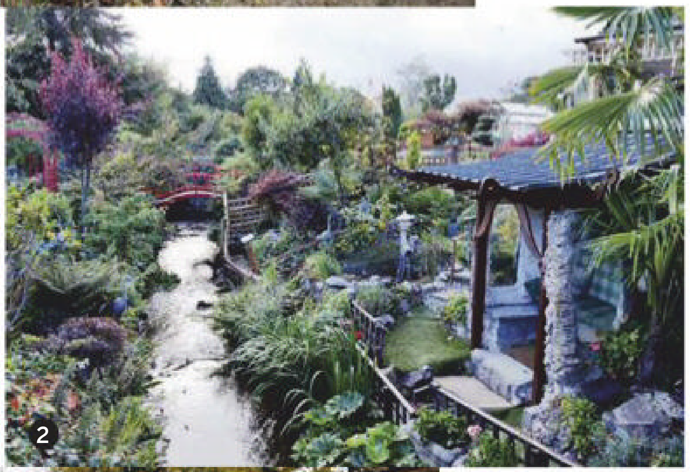
❾ **Garden masterclass with Andy Sturgeon**
Join the award-winning designer for a talk and hands-on design workshop at the National Trust garden Beningbrough. The day includes a tour of the garden. 14 October, 10am-4.30pm. £150. Beningbrough, York, North Yorkshire YO30 1DD. Tel 01904 472027, nationaltrust.org.uk

❿ **Soil Health for Growers Day Course**
Learn more about preserving soil health, on this one-day course at Trill Farm with Niels Corfield. 14 October, 10am-4.30pm. Trill Farm, Pudleylake Road, Musbury, Axminster, Devon EX13 8TU. Tel 01297 631113, trillfarm.co.uk

⓫ **An Introduction to Garden History**
Discover how gardens have evolved over time, from ancient and medieval gardens to the present day, in six weekly sessions led by Alison Moller. 16 October – 20 November, 2pm-4pm. £45. Conference Suite, Writtle University College, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3RR. essexgardenstrust.org.uk

⓬ **Autumn Flavours from your Garden**
Find out which of your ornamental plants are edible in this talk from garden designer Juliet Sargeant with tasters prepared by chef Samantha Matthews. 18 October, 10.30am-12pm. £25. Borde Hill Garden, Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1XP. Tel 01444 450326, bordehill.co.uk

LEANNE BRACEY



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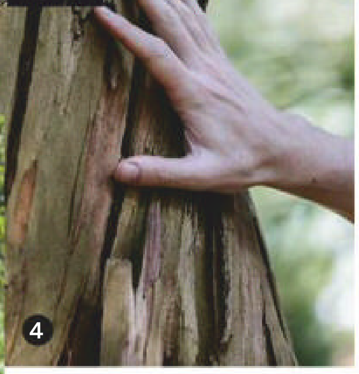

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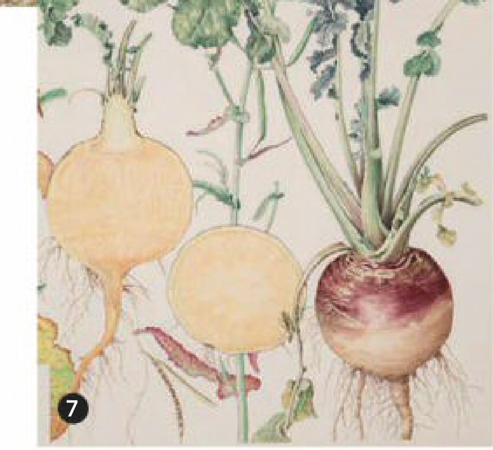

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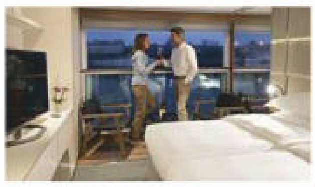

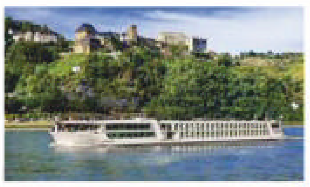

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For autumn tidying

COMPILED BY NIKI GOSS

MAIN IMAGE (THIS PAGE AND OVERLEAF) BY STEVE SAYERS

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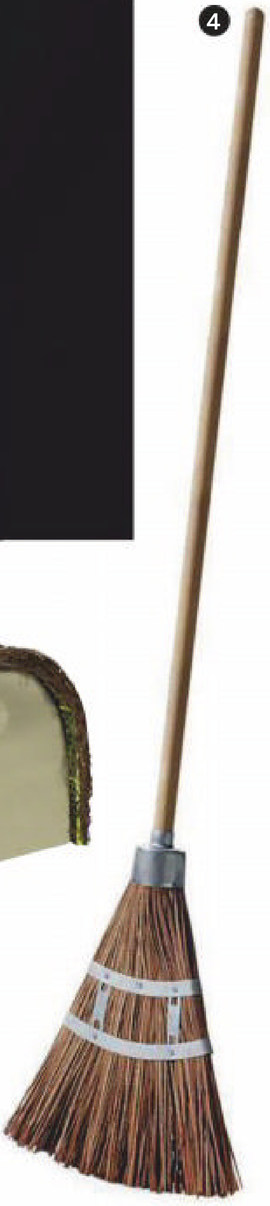

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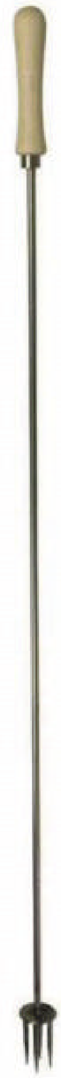

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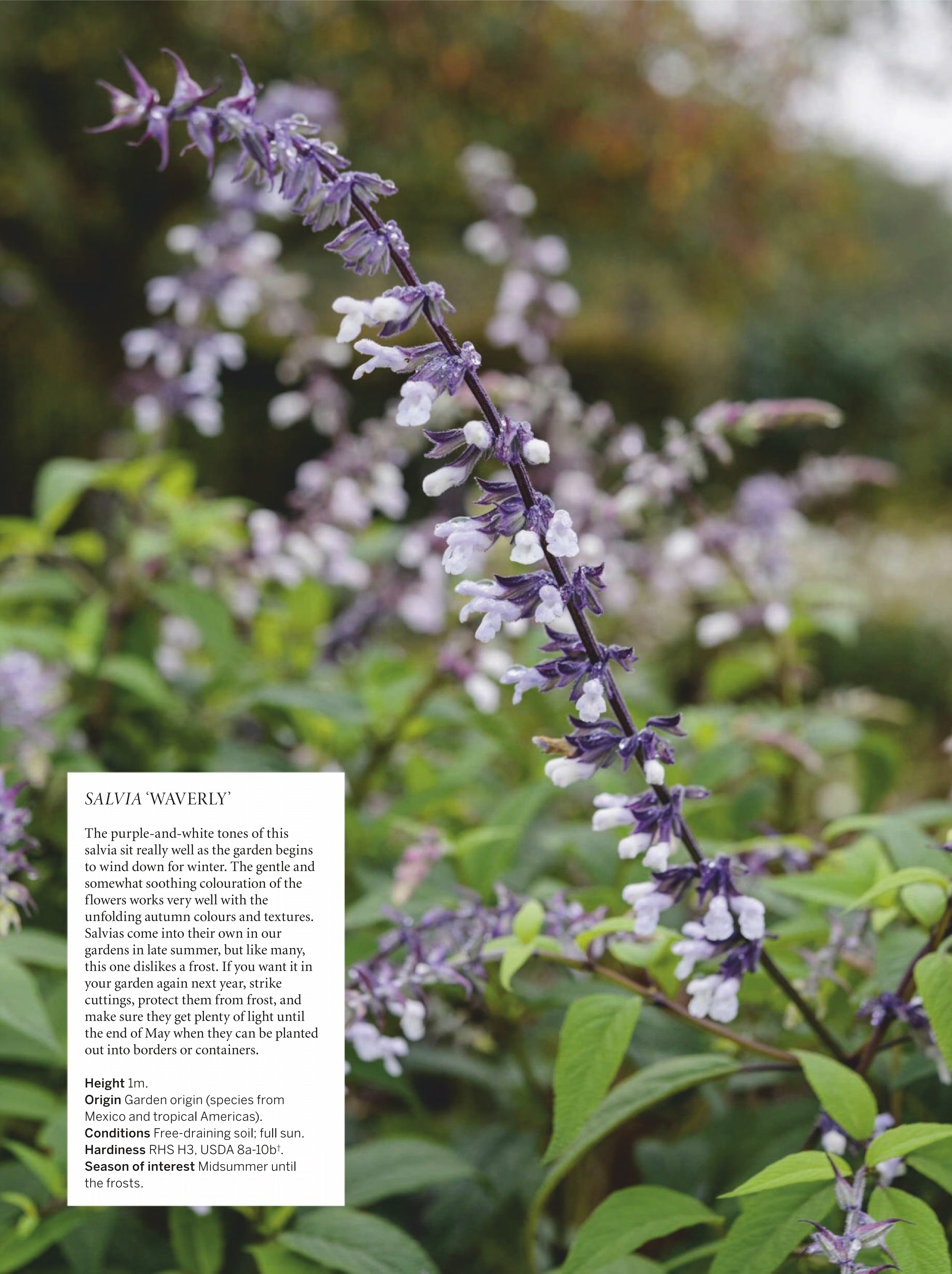


SALVIA 'WAVERLY'

The purple-and-white tones of this salvia sit really well as the garden begins to wind down for winter. The gentle and somewhat soothing colouration of the flowers works very well with the unfolding autumn colours and textures. Salvias come into their own in our gardens in late summer, but like many, this one dislikes a frost. If you want it in your garden again next year, strike cuttings, protect them from frost, and make sure they get plenty of light until the end of May when they can be planted out into borders or containers.

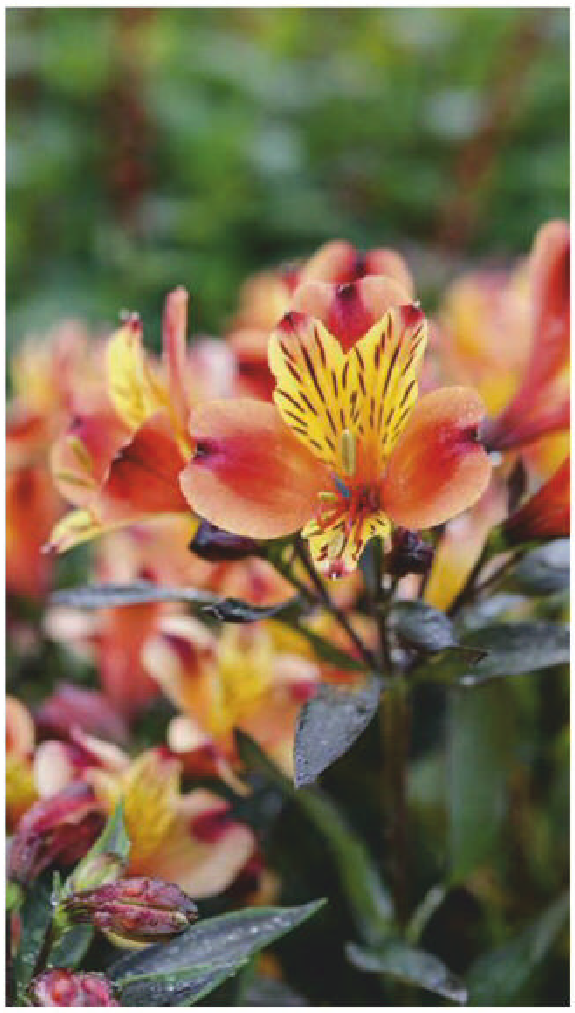
Height 1m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Mexico and tropical Americas).
Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b†.
Season of interest Midsummer until the frosts.

OCTOBER PLANTS

Warm and bright colours help ease the transition to cooler days with an exotic-looking alstroemeria, a sophisticated dahlia and autumn-flowering camellia among Tom's picks

WORDS TOM BROWN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Tom Brown
is head gardener
at West Dean Gardens
westdean.org.uk



ALSTROEMERIA INDIAN SUMMER (= 'TESRONTO')

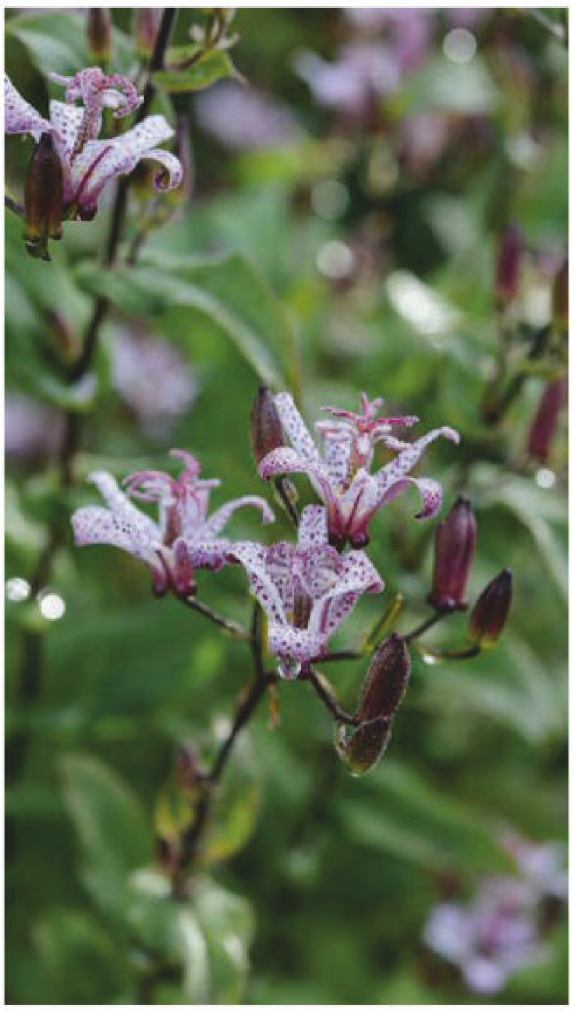
Striking blooms make this an excellent cut flower – but pull rather than cut the stems to encourage its generous nature. The bronze foliage also makes it useful as a foil among other shrubs and perennials. Foliage colour is best achieved by siting it in a sun-drenched position, but it needs moist, fertile soil to achieve the best display. Experience has taught me to mulch the plants well during their first winter to insulate the roots and ensure perenniality.

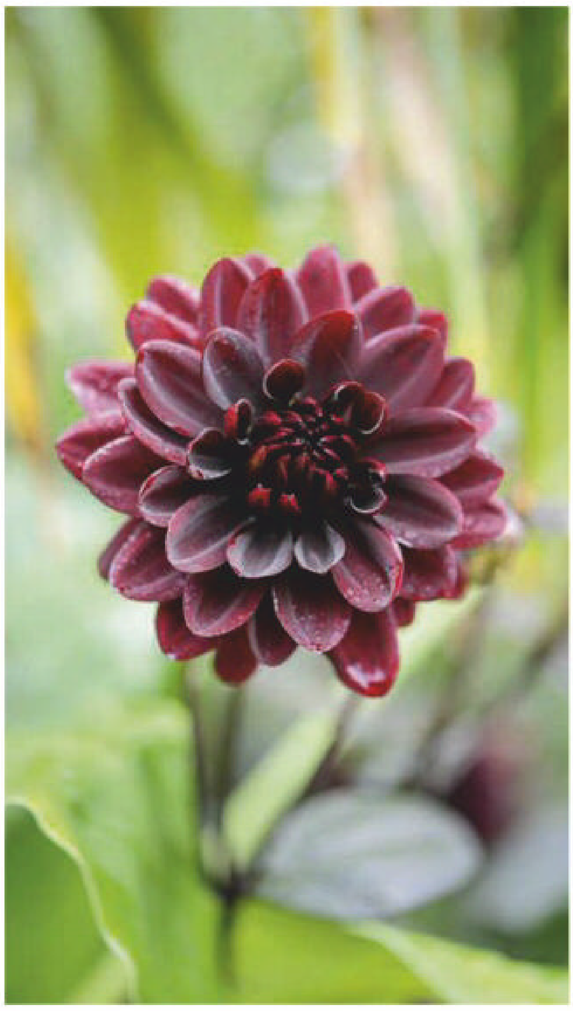
Height 1.5m.
Origin Garden origin (species from South America).
Conditions Fertile, free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Early summer until the frosts.

TRICYRTIS FORMOSANA STOLONIFERA GROUP

With its intricate, detailed flowers, the toad lily is an exquisite and exotic-looking addition to a border. Although reliably perennial, I have found it migrates towards the front of the border where drainage is at its best. Although fertility and moisture are key in summer, for best results try to position this plant where there is sharp drainage in winter. The real trick is placement as it comes into flower when many other plants in a border are drawing to a close. It works well grouped with *Hydrangea paniculata* and ferns.

Height 1m.
Origin Taiwan and southern Japan.
Conditions Moist, free-draining soil; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Early autumn.





DAHLIA 'KARMA CHOC'

Dahlias in the Karma series are much admired by flower arrangers for their long stems. This is perhaps the most opulent with rich-maroon flowers and bronze foliage – and it smells of chocolate. Avoid the trap of planting too many dark flowers together, and keep them as an accent to avoid losing their potent impact. With most dahlias, ensure that the plant has a good framework of sturdy stems by enriching the soil prior to planting. A weekly tomato feed from mid-June will go a long way to giving you great results. AGM*.

Height 1.5-2m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Mexico and Central America).
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest July until first frosts.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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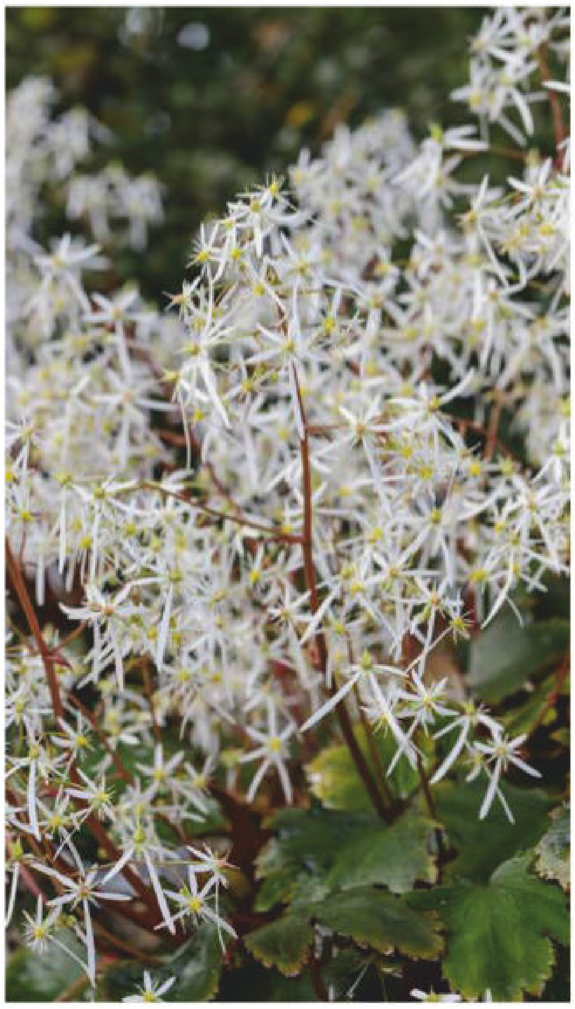


SAXIFRAGA 'RUBRIFOLIA'

A delightful, hardy saxifrage that is great for partially shaded borders or containers. In early autumn, masses of frothy, white flowers cover the bronze foliage, which has provided interest for most of late spring and summer. Ideal for the front of a shady border that has good fertility and drainage. To achieve the ideal growing conditions for this saxifrage, aim to replicate a deciduous woodland floor, with rich, open and crumbly leaf mould. AGM.

Height 10-50cm.
Origin Garden origin (hybrid of *Saxifraga fortunei* from China, Japan and Korea).
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.
Season of interest Late summer until autumn.

LEONOTIS LEONURUS

Known as lion's ear, this tender perennial produces whorls of bright-orange flowers at the end of summer, adding an exotic flavour to container plantings and borders. It can be shy to flower when planted in a border, and is best in a container where roots can be restricted and fed with potash to encourage a strong flowering performance. As an insurance policy, I would suggest taking cuttings and overwintering in a frost-free place, although in a sheltered garden you may be fortunate enough to get it through to the following year.

Height 2m.
Origin Southern Africa.
Conditions Will grow well in most free-draining soils; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.
Season of interest Late summer through to early autumn.

CAMELLIA SASANQUA 'NARUMIGATA'

I love a plant that stands out from the crowd and this autumn-flowering species does that. Originating from Japan, sasanqua camellias require a more sheltered position than spring-flowering species, but if you have an ericaceous soil they are well worth a try. I find the elegant, pure-white, single flowers of this cultivar particularly attractive at this time of year. During October, and then sporadically throughout the winter months, they help to light up shaded and protected positions beneath the canopy of a tree. AGM.

Height 2.5-4m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Japan).
Conditions Fertile, moisture-retentive, and well-drained ericaceous soil; partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.
Season of interest Autumn and winter.

PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Although best known for its spectacular open-air theatre, the **Minack Theatre and Garden** is home to a wonderful subtropical garden that is a dramatic attraction in itself. Full of exotic plants, many of them mature, the gardens showcase agaves, aeoniums, strelitzia and echiums across the clifftop site. Niall and Jill Milligan have orchestrated this planting scheme, so it displays many plants that most of us can only dream of cultivating in our own gardens. Porthcurno, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 6JU. Tel 01736 810181, minack.com

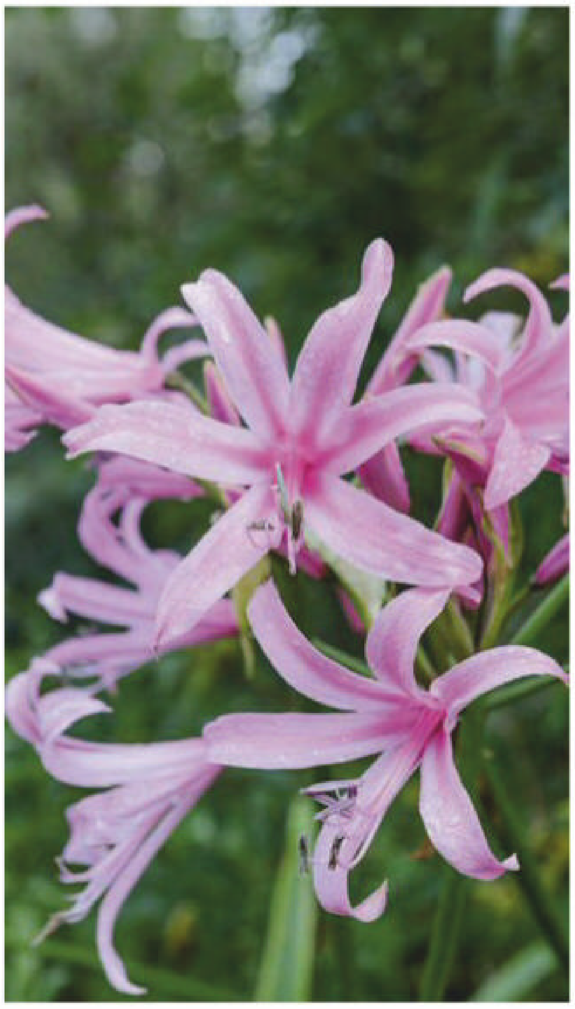
The walled garden at **Marks Hall** is unusual in that it's walled on only three sides, with one aspect sloping down to a lake. Formal hornbeam hedges divide a modern planting style, laid out in a series of spaces with a common thread and flavour throughout. Simple but wonderfully effective plant combinations give a rhythm and an immersive experience as you wander through perennial-based planting – laid out by the London-based, German designer Brita von Schoenaich. Beyond the three walls is a wonderful arboretum. Well worth a visit. Marks Hall Gardens and Arboretum, Coggeshall, Colchester, Essex CO6 1TG. Tel 01376 563796, markshall.org.uk

For many, October is the month synonymous with apple harvests, and one of the finest establishments for seeing a huge range of fruit is **Brogdale Farm**. Set in the weald of Kent, ▷

ROSA 'FRU DAGMAR HASTRUP'

Rugosas are worth looking at if you've struggled with other roses, as they are robust and reliable. This one stands out for autumn colour and fruit. The compact plants produce pointed buds opening to mid-pink, single flowers that evolve into large, eye-catching, red hips from October. The glossy, green foliage is largely resistant to pests and disease. In poorer soils, I grow *Origanum* around the base to attract pollinators and disguise foliage sacrificed lower down the stems. AGM.

Height 50cm-1m.
Origin Discovered as a seedling of *Rosa rugosa* and named in Denmark in 1914.
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.
Season of interest Flowers from June until the autumn; foliage and fruit from October.



X *AMARINE TUBERGENII* BELLADIVA SERIES

Amarines gives a high summer-like display towards the tail end of the season, as the colder nights creep in. Bred as a hybrid between *Amaryllis* and *Nerine*, amarines combine the flamboyancy of the autumn-flowering amaryllis with the delicacy and robust nature of nerines. Like both its parents, this is a bulb that is best suited to a sun-baked location with little competition to cast shade over it while it grows. It is also a bulb for which drainage is key, so if you garden on a heavy soil, I would suggest you stick to growing these bulbs in containers.

Height 50cm.
Origin Garden origin (species from South Africa).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.
Season of interest Autumn.

ABUTILON MEGAPOTAMICUM 'WAKEHURST'

When I saw this cultivar in the new Exotic Garden at RHS Wisley I was impressed by the colour it displayed on a bright, sunny, October day. Its large, bicoloured flowers appear throughout summer but increase as the season progresses. It can be grown as a free-standing shrub or against a sun-baked wall – both situations needing shelter from the extreme winter. I always strike cuttings in summer and overwinter in a frost-free place as an insurance policy.

Height 2m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Brazil).
Conditions Reasonably moist but free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Midsummer through to late autumn.

MANY THANKS TO PARHAM HOUSE & GARDENS (PARHAMINSUSSEX.CO.UK) IN WEST SUSSEX WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

▷ it houses an impressive collection of fruit trees. Its October Apple Festival offers the chance to try and buy more than 2,200 apple cultivars from all over the world and from almost every county in Britain – including many heritage cultivars. A visit is guaranteed to spark an interest in growing your own fruit. Brogdale Collections, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ. Tel 01795 536250, brogdalecollections.org

Founded by plantsman and plant hunter Nick Macer, **Pan-Global Plants**, offers a selection of unusual plants that have been carefully selected and tried by Nick and his team before they make it into the pages of the nursery's catalogue – so they've done most of the hard work for you. Its range of plants is a reminder that simply because a plant is not easily produced on a large scale, it doesn't mean it is unsuitable for most beds and borders. Open until the end of October, it now offers mail order but is well worth a trip. Be sure to make plenty of room in your car boot for plants – you'll need it. The Walled Garden, Frampton Court, Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucestershire GL2 7EX. Tel 01452 741641, panglobalplants.com

A great destination to enjoy autumn colour and late planting is the **Savill Garden** in Windsor Great Park. Created in the 1930s, the garden has continued to evolve with new planting schemes and features. One of its highlights is the many carefully sited woody plants, which at this time of year offer a fabulous autumnal spectacle. Although October is a great time to see the colourful foliage, many herbaceous plants and displays under glass round off a visit. Wick Lane, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey TW20 0UJ. Tel 01753 860222, windsorgreatpark.co.uk

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The Outsider

The Pelion peninsula in north-central Greece provides horticulturist Hannah Gardner with a host of botanising sites rich in orchids and autumn-flowering, bulbous perennials

WORDS HANNAH GARDNER ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

The unspoilt Pelion peninsula lies between the Pagasetic Gulf and the Aegean Sea. The slopes of Mount Pelion (1,624m) are a botanically rich wilderness, a mix of Mediterranean and Balkan species that descend to pristine beaches. Rainfall here is relatively high, the hills forested by oak, chestnut, fir and beech trees. Many of the picturesque mountain villages with their ancient plane trees and arched bridges, thrive while others lie abandoned, but it's an atmospheric region drenched in tradition.

The splendid, limestone Mount Olympus rises to 2,919m just 18km from the coast, and offers wonderful botanising at a wide variety of elevations, depending on when you visit. It can be accessed from Litochoro, which lies at the foot of the Enipeus Gorge, a wonderful woodland location for plant hunting.

Inspiration for the trip

I wanted to explore little-known and characterful Pelion, but despite being familiar with the mythical status of Mount Olympus, I had given little thought as to what might grow beneath the feet of its numerous, bickering deities. This changed with the onset of my horticultural education and now no trip to northern Greece would be complete without a hike on Mount Olympus.

When to go

April is peak season for the orchids of Pelion, May for the plants in the Enipeus Gorge, but there is a significant flourish of autumn-flowering species in both locations from late September. Autumn brings the additional rewards of mellow leaf colour, warm seas and pungent mushrooms.

Where to go

In Pelion, the Centre for Research and Protection of Wild Orchids in Kerasia is a great place to start. The centre's director, Professor Dimitrios Ikonomidis, is an authority on orchids (and there are 52 different orchids in Pelion), but he is also knowledgeable about the many medicinal plants that are abundant here. There are good botanising sites on the way to the abandoned mountain village of Ano Kerasia, where an idiosyncratic 'church' bell is slung over the branches of an ancient chestnut tree. A circular hiking trail via Flamouri monastery heads off from here. The hills are clothed with spiky kermes oak (*Quercus coccifera*) juniper, cedar and chestnuts, and the spring air is deliciously tainted with essential oils rising from a low matrix of *Anthemis*, *Cistus*, oregano, lavender, sage, thyme and wild mint. Giant orchids (*Himantoglossum robertianum*) stand proud, but look closely and you may see some members of the *Orchis* genus – green-winged orchid (*Orchis morio*), the pink butterfly orchid (*O. papilionacea*) and the shaggy, pale *O. italica* – alongside pastel drifts of *Anemone pavonina*. The delicate, primrose-yellow *O. provincialis* favours pockets of acidic soil. *Ophrys* orchids, with their insect-like flowers – *Ophrys apifera*, the brown, velvety *O. sphegodes* subsp. *mammosa*, *O. speculum* and *O. reinholdii* – are all here in quantity. In autumn, the boulder-strewn hills and valleys have a second season, featuring sunny *Sternbergia lutea* and the pastel shades of *Cyclamen hederifolium* and crocuses.

On Mount Olympus, the road coils past tall, candelabra-like *Verbascum* and eye-catching scarlet *Lilium chalcedonicum* before terminating at Prionia (1,000m) where there is a seasonal café. The onward route towards a refuge threads past a spring and beautiful waterfalls, with displays of green, Balkan *Helleborus odorus* subsp. *cyclophyllus*, *Scilla bifolia*, anemones, and the fruitily scented *Geranium macrorrhizum*. The forest route through the Enipeus Gorge past Agios Dionysios Monastery and on to Litochoro offers more treasures. *Fritillaria messanensis* is common, and the soft, silver rosettes of the endemic African violet relative, *Jankaea heldreichii*, which has wonderful lilac flowers in May, are visible on rocks and cliffs. In June the orchids flower, along with the beautiful common twayblade (*Neottia ovata*) – a tricky one to pick out in the dappled light. The cute flowers of *Cyclamen hederifolium* appear before the leaves in autumn, forming baby-pink, floral carpets in the shady, riverside woodlands. The leaves are often purplish underneath and gloriously diverse in their patterning. The pink-chequered *Colchicum bivonae* also flowers here before its leaves reappear in spring.

Plant to grow at home

In Pelion, and near Litochoro, the strappy, intensely green leaves of *Sternbergia lutea*, the winter daffodil, sprout from their bulbs in September. They are related to daffodils in the *Amaryllidaceae* family, but confusingly their glossy, citrus-yellow flowers look more like those of crocus. This genus of eight species of bulbous perennials is found across southern Europe to central Asia, and the European species flower in autumn.

S. lutea is commonly available in bulb catalogues and is very free-flowering. It brings a vibrant, zesty pop of colour late in the season that associates well with the evergreens and silvery greys of much Mediterranean planting. *S. lutea* Angustifolia Group (10cm) has compact flowers and narrow leaves. Bulbs require a dry summer rest (during which they aestivate), free-draining, gritty soil that is moderately fertile, and full sun as they are intolerant of winter wet. They are, however, frost-hardy, and thrive in chalky soil. Plant bulbs 15cm deep in late summer at the base of a sunny wall or path edge, or in terracotta pots. If happy, they will clump up and only need dividing if they become congested and flowering is impaired.

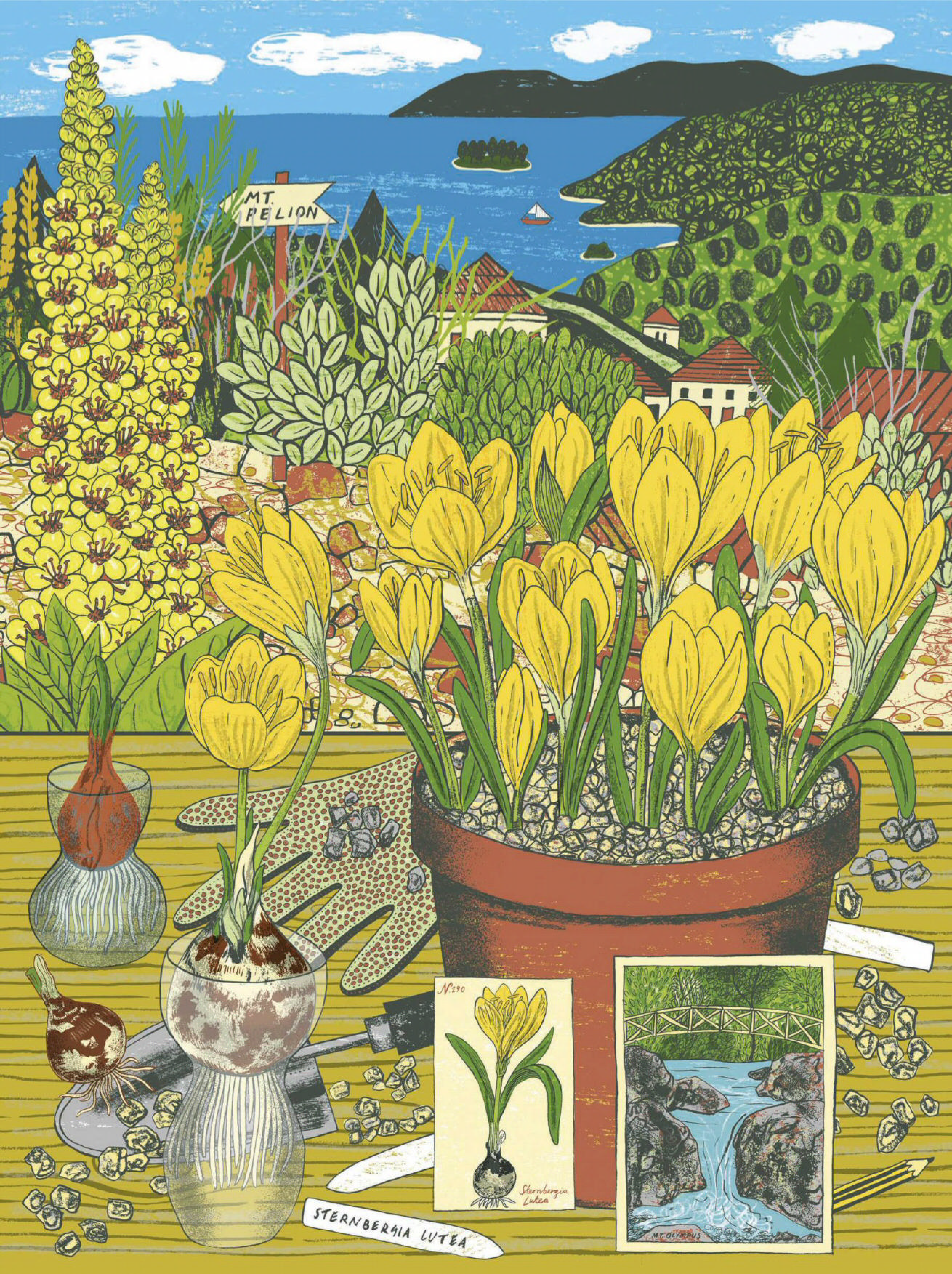
Guides and maps

Flowers of Greece and The Balkans by Oleg Polunin (Oxford University Press, 1997).
Centre for Research and Protection of Wild Orchids in North Pelion: **orchids-pelion.gr**

Where to stay

Dryades Hotel and Spa
Agios Lavrentios, 37300, Pelion, Magnesia, Greece.
Tel +30 (0)24280 96110, hoteldryades.gr
Located in a wonderful mountain village with stunning views down to the coast.

Hotel Dimatis
Agios Dimîtrios, 60100, Greece.
Tel +30 (0)23510 84202, dimatis.eu
Family owned hotel nestled in the foothills of Mount Olympus.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GARDENING TALENT

Alexander Hoyle

Kew-trained plantsman and designer Alexander indulges in timelessly romantic planting schemes in his projects including gardens in central London and as far afield as Tangiers

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love The first plant I ever bought was a teasel, but the first plants I fell for were pelargoniums. I started collecting them as a teenager, and still love their timeless, proud elegance.
Who has inspired your career? Joseph Atkin, head gardener at Aberglasney, ingrained a work ethic in me, which I carry forward to this day; he pushed me in the right direction, and encouraged me to study at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which was a life-changing experience.
Horticultural heroes Norah Lindsay. She was active in the 1920s, the First World War was over, and in many ways it was the golden age of plants – aesthetically beautiful, new gardens, with their architectural structure and planting that looked as if it had always been there. Cliveden is one of my favourite gardens. It was designed by Lindsay, and I love its statuesque, towering, architectural yews, and the almost serendipitous planting.
Ideal weekend I recently stayed at Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland. When the estate closed, you had the whole garden to yourself – the golden hour. It was absolute heaven.
Least favourite plant group Golden foliage – anything with *aureus* in its name. I love silver, though.
What principles have guided your attitude to gardening? Start young, have a strong work ethic and be prepared to work long days. I started as a garden boy at a local garden that opened for charity.
Tips for every gardener Play with planting combinations, and don't be afraid to make mistakes. Visit lots of gardens for ideas and record your inspiration and work in a scrapbook – Instagram is great for this.
Instagram fix @jimiblake_huntingbrookgardens is inspirational.
Unsung hero of the plant world Ivy; it has such a bad reputation, but I've had a couple of requests recently to include it. It works especially well in shady city gardens and there are so many interesting cultivars, particularly *Hedera pastuchovii* 'Ann Ala' with its elongated, beautifully veined, dark green leaves.
Biggest challenge facing gardeners today As I consider this following a summer that had one of the hottest July days recorded, it seems apt to consider irrigation, and how we adapt to climate change.
What's the next big seasonal task you'll be tackling? It's that time of year, when we will be planning our autumn bare-rooted planting and choosing bulbs for spring flowering.
Contact alex@alexanderhoyle.co.uk, Instagram @alexander.hoyle

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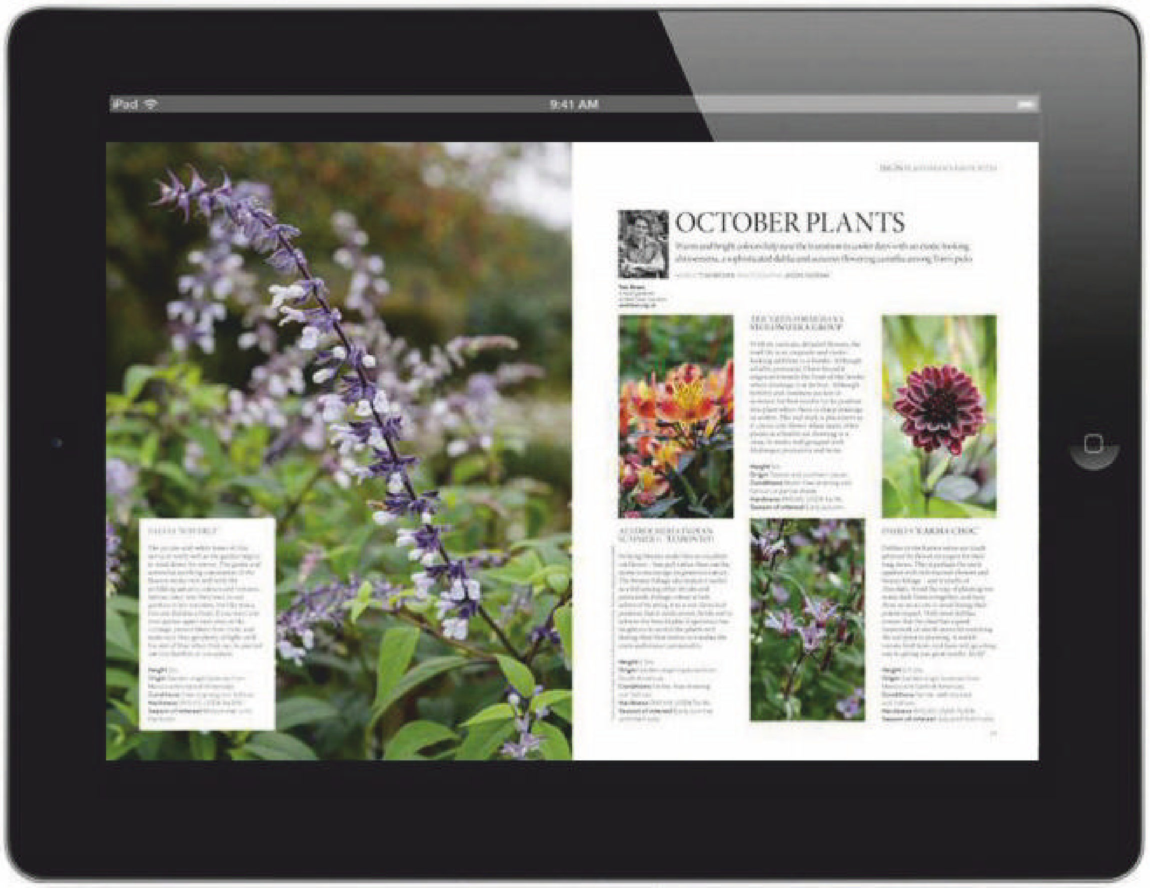
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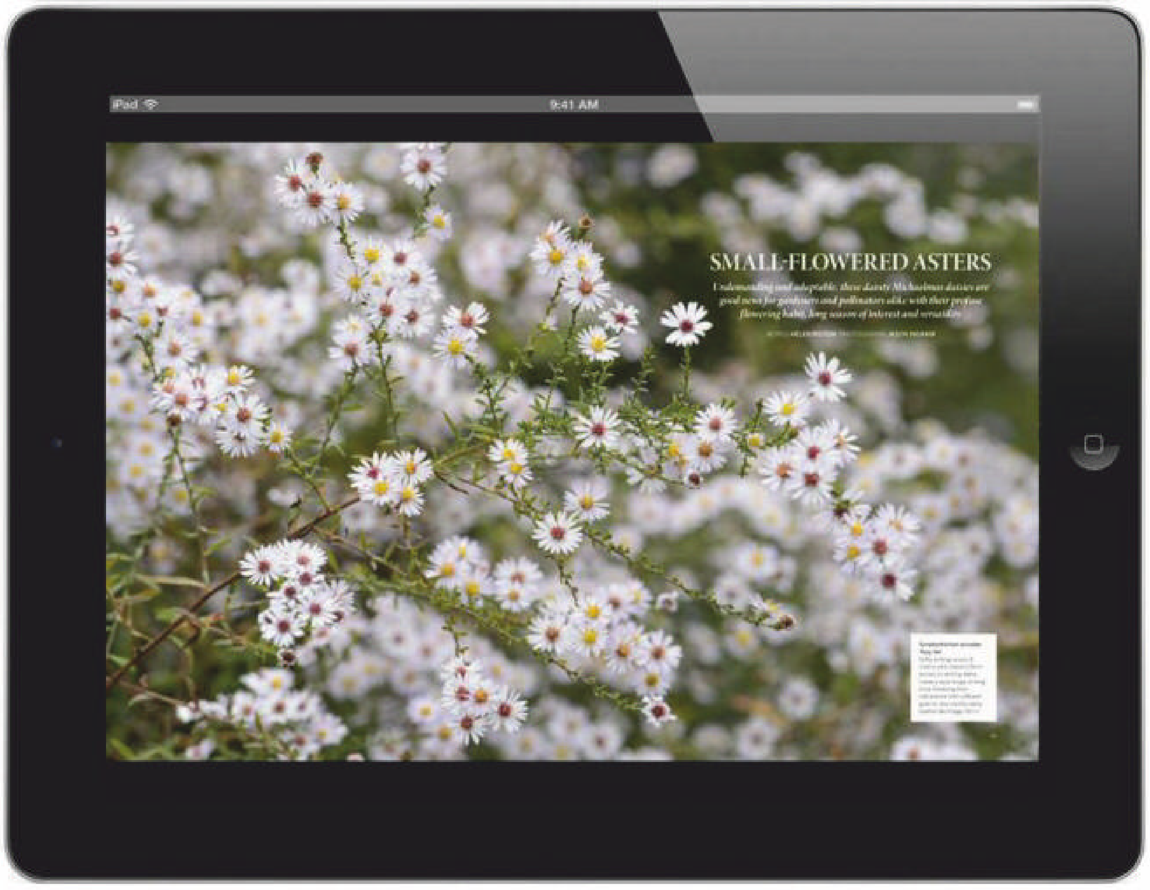
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SMALL-FLOWERED ASTERS

A must-have read for passionate gardeners, *Gardens Illustrated* magazine provides a unique insight into the world's most beautiful gardens, expert advice and planting ideas.

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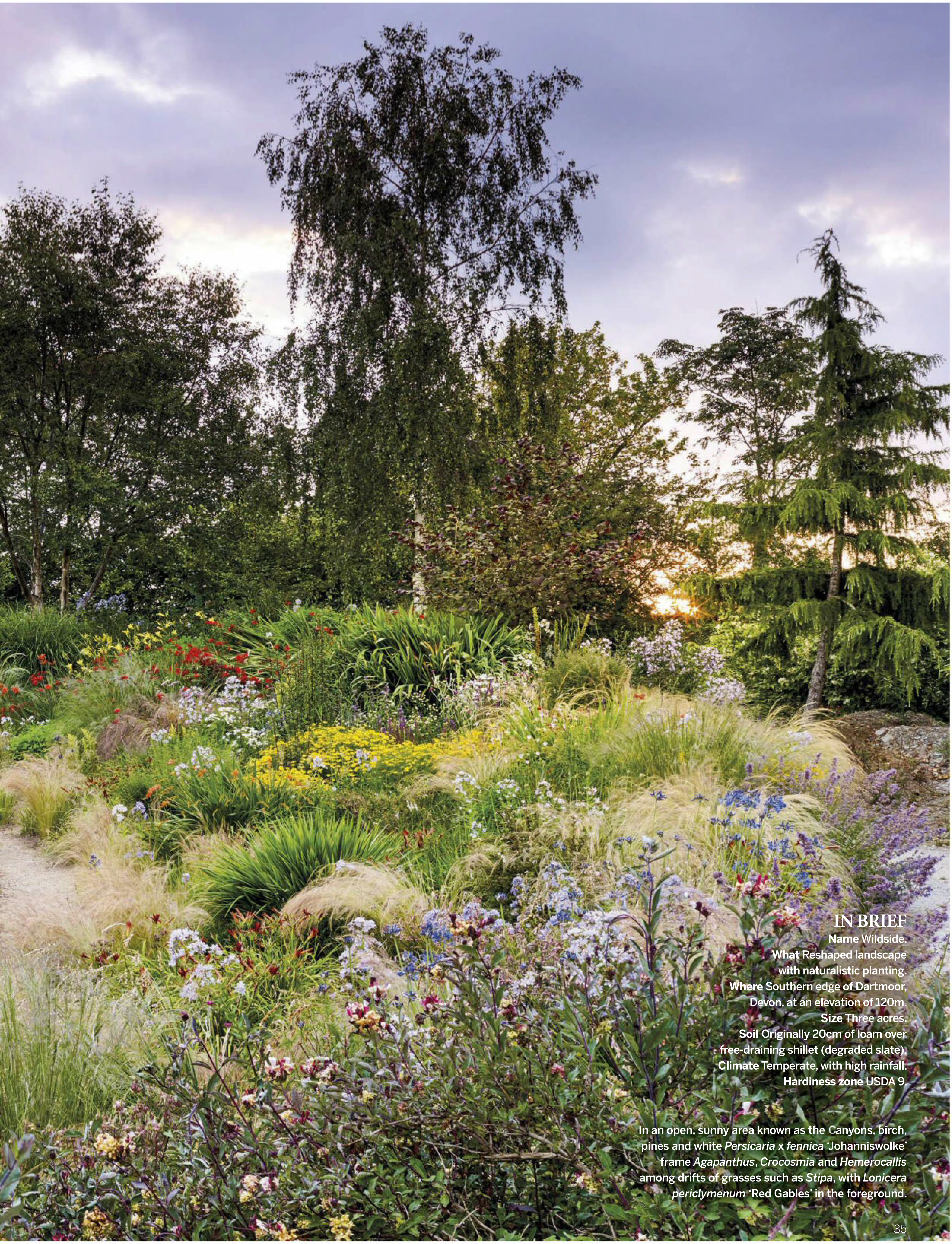
Wild thing

In the Devon landscape, plantsman Keith Wiley works in harmony with nature, allowing plants to thrive much as they would in the wild

WORDS MATTHEW REESE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



IN BRIEF

Name Wildside.
What Reshaped landscape with naturalistic planting.
Where Southern edge of Dartmoor, Devon, at an elevation of 120m.
Size Three acres.
Soil Originally 20cm of loam over free-draining shillet (degraded slate).
Climate Temperate, with high rainfall.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

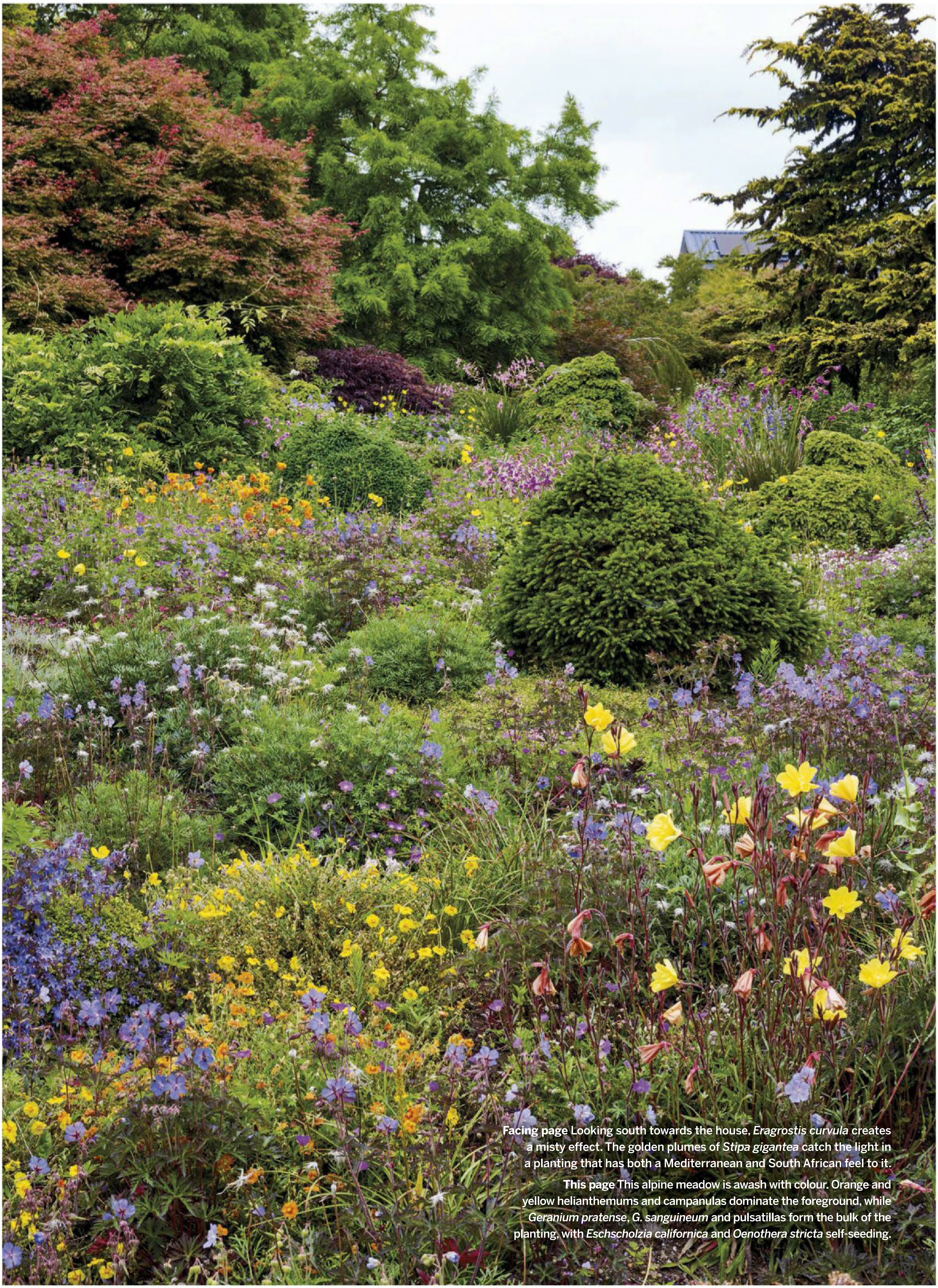
In an open, sunny area known as the Canyons, birch, pines and white *Persicaria* x *fennica* 'Johanniswolke' frame *Agapanthus*, *Crocosmia* and *Hemerocallis* among drifts of grasses such as *Stipa*, with *Lonicera periclymenum* 'Red Gables' in the foreground.

I take a piece of natural landscape that I like and modify it to create a piece of garden

In 2004, Keith Wiley, former head gardener at The Garden House on the edge of Dartmoor, moved a very short distance to create an ambitious new garden. The flat, four-acre site, once a cider orchard, is now home to the exciting, magnificent Wildside. Looking across the undulating landscape now teeming with plants, it's hard to believe this was a nondescript field not so long ago.

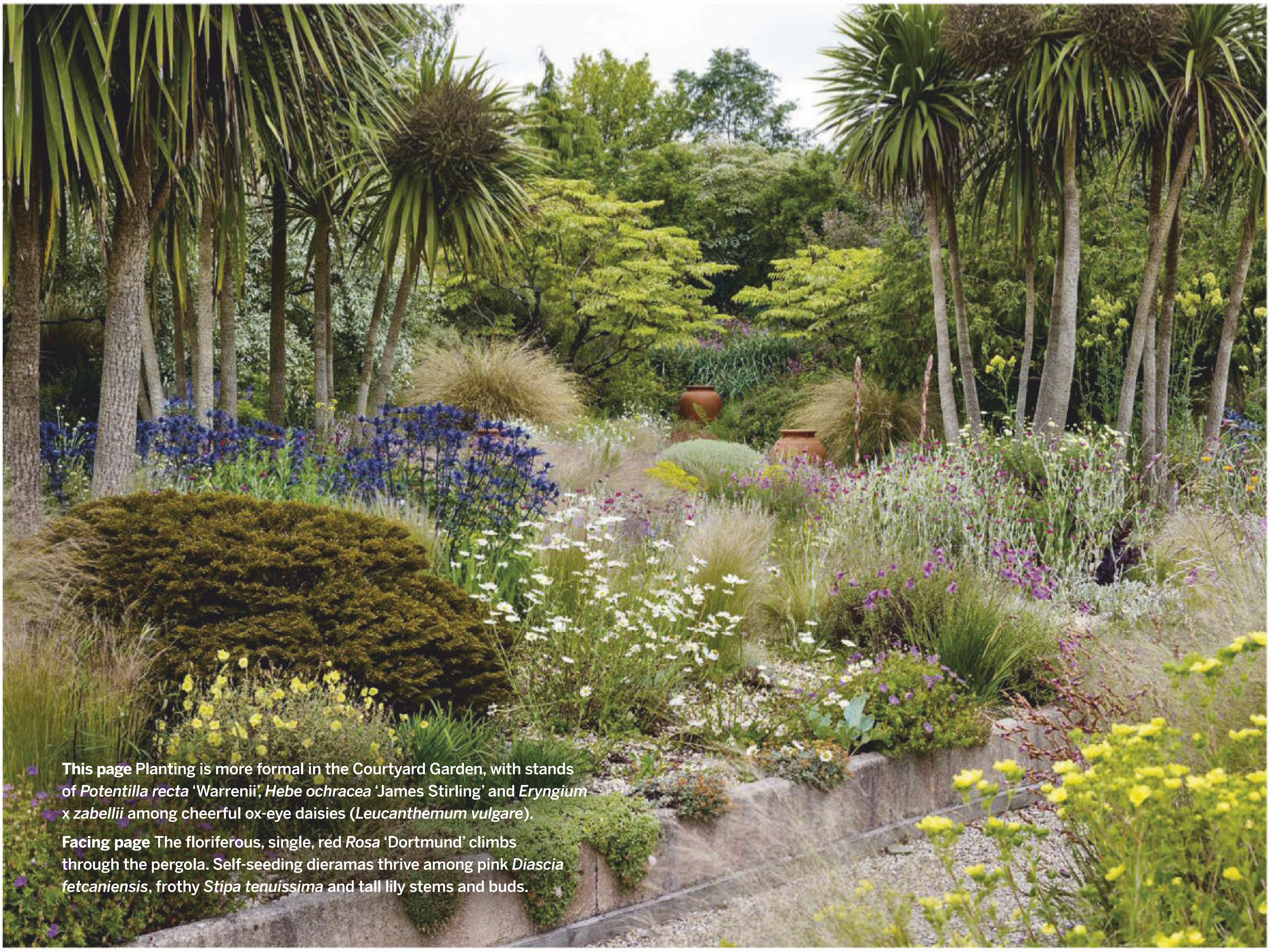
Over the past 15 years, Keith has hewn a garden out of the land, shifting thousands of tonnes of soil and shillet to make suitable habitats for a very diverse range of plants. He dug down to create lush pools, and built up banks to make free-draining mounds for bulbs and trees. "We get 60 inches of rain each year, so drainage is key," Keith explains. "Even if the banks are small, it means plants aren't standing in water during the winter." An advantage of being the designer, builder, gardener and owner is that every part of the design has been considered in intimate detail over several years. Keith gestures to a path: "I might drop that path by four inches, then look at it and maybe drop it a few more inches – eventually you end up with the shapes you're happy with. It's an evolutionary design process."

Much of the planting is influenced by natural landscapes and communities observed all over the world, though they are not direct copies. "I try to capture the essence," says Keith. "I take a piece of natural landscape that I like and modify it to create a piece of garden, whereas most people try to make the garden look more natural." ▷



Facing page Looking south towards the house, *Eragrostis curvula* creates a misty effect. The golden plumes of *Stipa gigantea* catch the light in a planting that has both a Mediterranean and South African feel to it.

This page This alpine meadow is awash with colour. Orange and yellow helianthemums and campanulas dominate the foreground, while *Geranium pratense*, *G. sanguineum* and pulsatillas form the bulk of the planting, with *Eschscholzia californica* and *Oenothera stricta* self-seeding.



This page Planting is more formal in the Courtyard Garden, with stands of *Potentilla recta* 'Warrenii', *Hebe ochracea* 'James Stirling' and *Eryngium* x *zabellii* among cheerful ox-eye daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*).

Facing page The floriferous, single, red *Rosa* 'Dortmund' climbs through the pergola. Self-seeding dieramas thrive among pink *Diascia fetcaniensis*, frothy *Stipa tenuissima* and tall lily stems and buds.

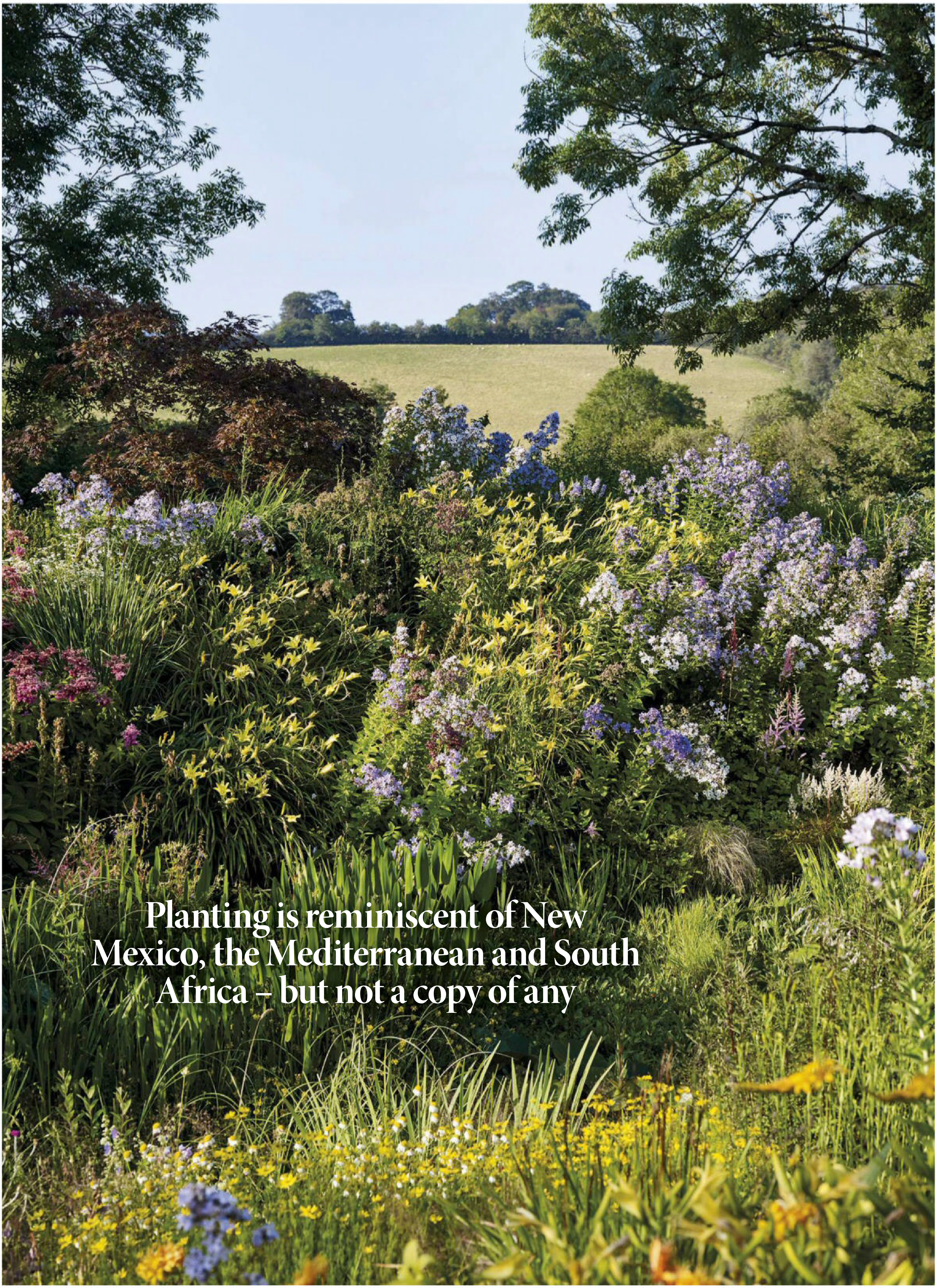
The only straight lines are the raised beds and pergola, inspired by the idea of a cloister

▷ The garden is laid out along a slope. "In the wild you find the broadleaf vegetation at the bottom of valleys," Keith explains. "And as you ascend, the leaf size gets smaller, you find birches and pines for example." At Wildside, herbaceous plants are located at the bottom of the garden, and as you move to the higher areas, the vegetation changes, with birch and pines dominating the scene. This planting style increases the awareness of altitude and amplifies a sense of naturalness as you move through the garden.

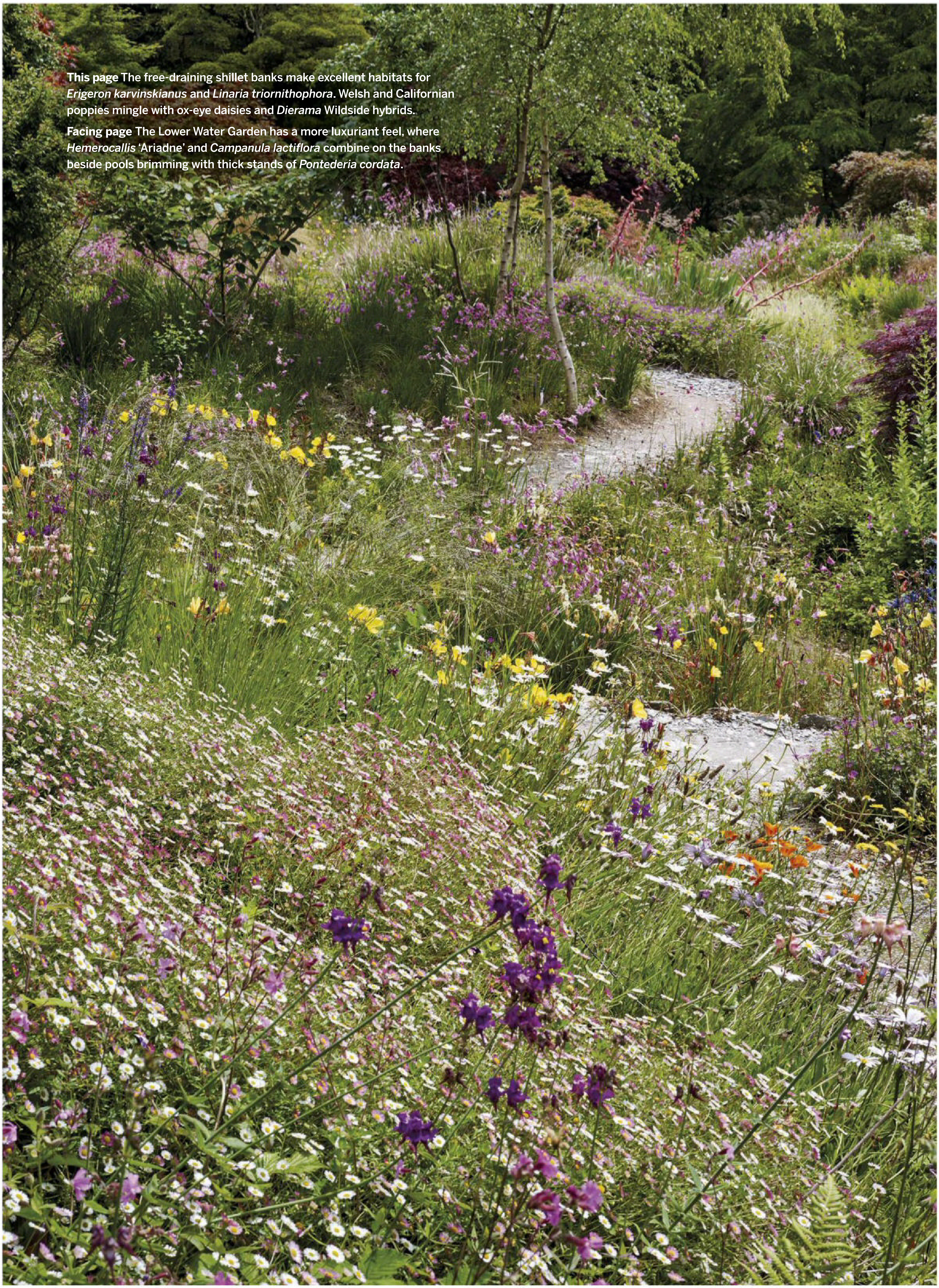
The lush, lower end of the garden is home to 80 magnolias, mainly planted in tight groups to create a multi-trunk coppice. They are underplanted with swathes of bulbs, starting with snowdrops in February and followed by erythroniums, which flower at the same time as the magnolias. The inspiration here is the ecology of hazel coppice and bluebell woodlands often found in the east of England, but with a distinct garden twist. Herbaceous elements come later and include rodgersias, irises, primulas, campanulas and ferns. In the open areas around the pools, dreamy combinations of summer-flowering perennials flourish. Nearby alpines make a patchwork, through which rhodohypoxis, dianthus and pulsatillas self-seed. Shape is important: acers, magnolias, free-standing wisterias and apple trees echo one another in form while creating a strong thread that holds everything together.

The garden is laid out more formally near the house. The only straight lines in the garden are raised beds

Turn to page 42 to continue ▷



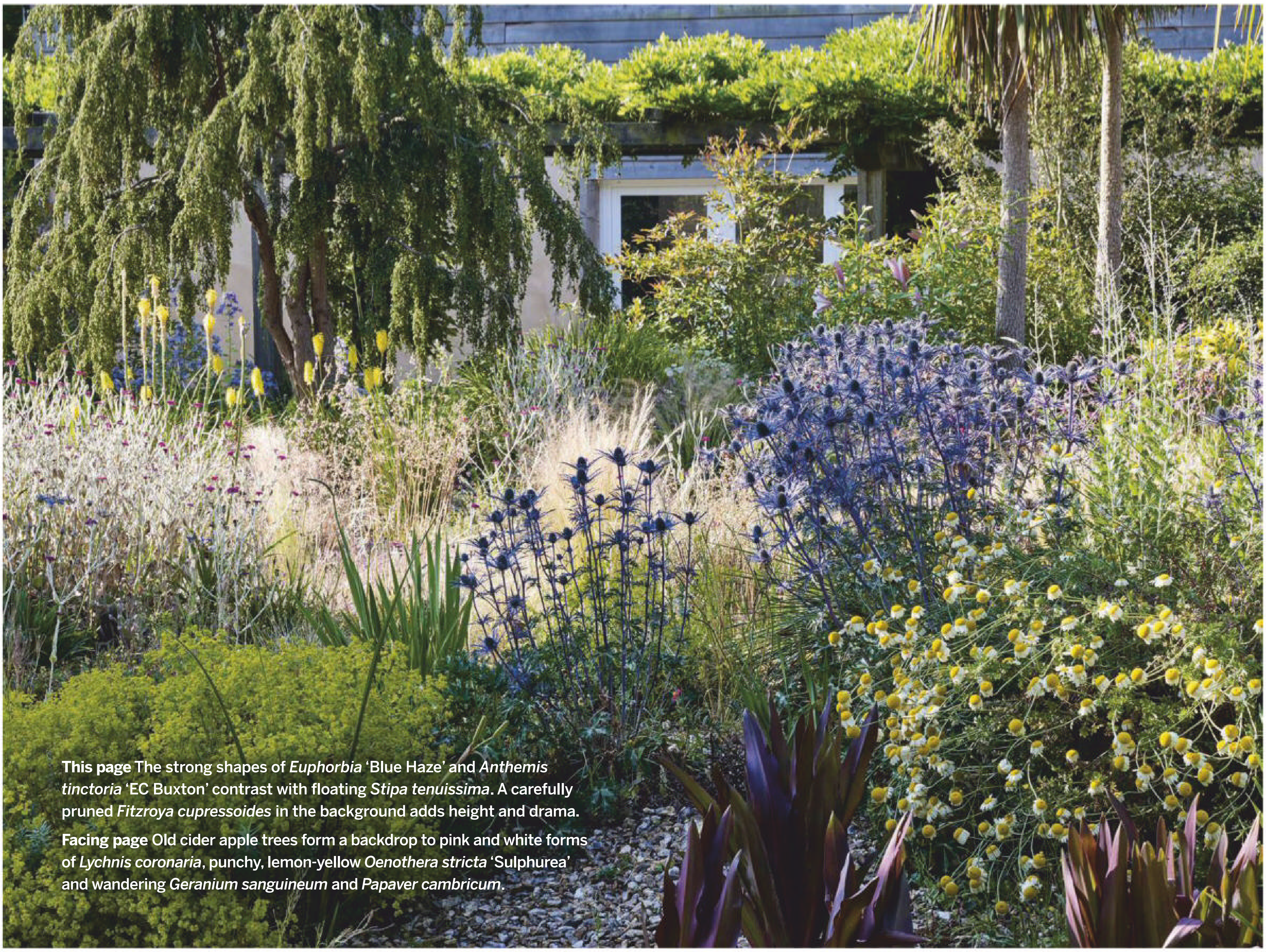
Planting is reminiscent of New Mexico, the Mediterranean and South Africa – but not a copy of any



This page The free-draining shillet banks make excellent habitats for *Erigeron karvinskianus* and *Linaria triornithophora*. Welsh and Californian poppies mingle with ox-eye daisies and *Dierama* Wildside hybrids.

Facing page The Lower Water Garden has a more luxuriant feel, where *Hemerocallis* 'Ariadne' and *Campanula lactiflora* combine on the banks beside pools brimming with thick stands of *Pontederia cordata*.

The planting style increases the awareness of altitude and amplifies a sense of naturalness



This page The strong shapes of *Euphorbia* 'Blue Haze' and *Anthemis tinctoria* 'EC Buxton' contrast with floating *Stipa tenuissima*. A carefully pruned *Fitzroya cupressoides* in the background adds height and drama.

Facing page Old cider apple trees form a backdrop to pink and white forms of *Lychnis coronaria*, punchy, lemon-yellow *Oenothera stricta* 'Sulphurea' and wandering *Geranium sanguineum* and *Papaver cambricum*.

▷ bordered by a pergola clothed in wisteria. This area is inspired by the idea of a cloister. "I love being in the shade of the pergola looking out over the garden," says Keith. The planting is a mixture of New Mexico, South Africa and the Mediterranean – "reminiscent of all, but not a copy of any," Keith reiterates. Arching dieramas naturalise in the free-draining soil and tall, multi-trunk cordylines frame the views as you move through the garden. Away from the house, the straight lines disappear, the small, low hills return and the scale grows. The garden becomes more open, with clumps of dazzling, blue agapanthus punching through the haze of grasses – drifts of eragrostis and stipa, alongside dramatic tussocks *Chionochloa* species – in a breathtaking display.

The garden is still growing. Over the brow of another hill, there is a new area waiting to be planted. Keith's excitement at the planned South African-style garden is infectious. He has it all laid out in his mind's eye and doubtless it will be every bit as extraordinary as the rest of the garden. □

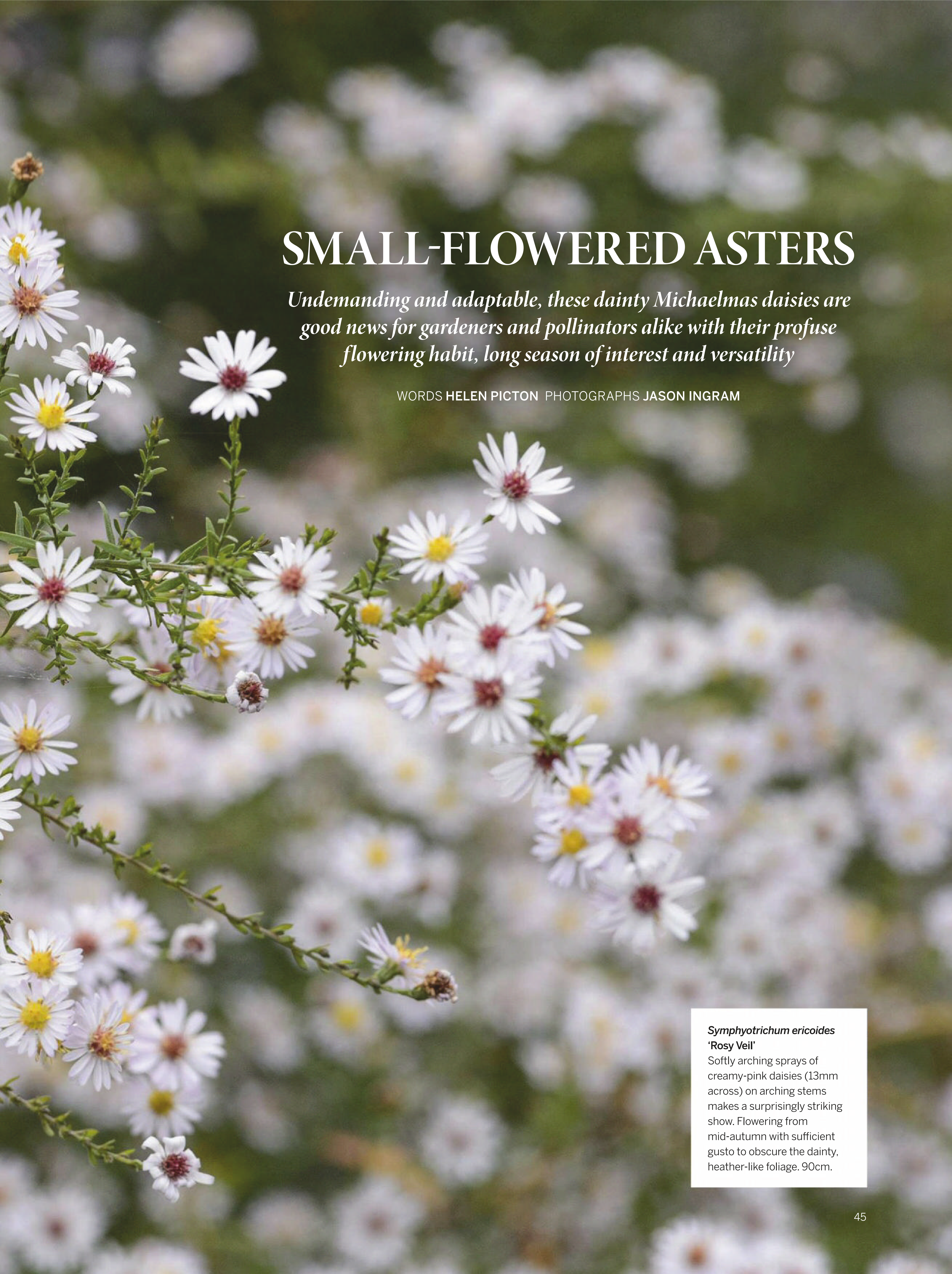
USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Green Lane, Buckland Monachorum, Devon PL20 7LP. **Tel** 01822 855755 **Website** wileyatwildside.com
Open Occasionally in spring and summer to correspond with the main peak flowering seasons; see website for details.

SMALL-FLOWERED ASTERS

Undemanding and adaptable, these dainty Michaelmas daisies are good news for gardeners and pollinators alike with their profuse flowering habit, long season of interest and versatility

WORDS **HELEN PICTON** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



***Symphyotrichum ericoides* 'Rosy Veil'**
Softly arching sprays of creamy-pink daisies (13mm across) on arching stems makes a surprisingly striking show. Flowering from mid-autumn with sufficient gusto to obscure the dainty, heather-like foliage. 90cm.

It would be hard to imagine autumn without the soft, pastel drifts of small-flowered asters. The individual flowers may be small, but they are produced en masse, transforming the plants into cloud-like forms. While some groups, such as the prolific New York asters, are grown for their striking individual flowers or depth of colour, the small-flowered asters offer a softer approach with their multitude of flowers, arching sprays and interesting foliage. Highly drought tolerant and resistant to mildew, and often able to flower in part shade, this distinct group is a welcome addition to the garden.

In the 1900s, this group formed the backbone of what were called starworts or Michaelmas daisies. With the hardy flower revival and the emergence of a more naturalistic style of planting popularised by William Robinson, small-flowered asters started to flourish. At this time, the first of the great collections emerged at Aldenham in Hertfordshire, thanks to the Hon. Vicary Gibbs and his head gardener Edwin Beckett, who raised many of the small-flowered hybrids, including the *ericoides* hybrid *Symphyotrichum* 'Hon. Vicary Gibbs'. These were ideal for planting en masse – imagine a huge group of *S. cordifolium* 'Chieftain' weaving its way between autumn-colouring shrubs, its plumes of soft lavender-blue swaying above robust, heart-shaped foliage, or *S.* 'Ringdove', forming a sea of hazy lavender in front of dark, formal, yew hedging. But as large gardens declined after the First World War, so did the small-flowered asters.

Their resurgence came about thanks in part to the rise of interest in flower arranging in the 1950s and 1960s. The delicate sprays of, for example, the white-flowered *S. ericoides* 'Cinderella' were perfect for autumn arrangements, but it was hard to find them in florists, so enthusiasts started to grow their own. Soon stunning plants such as the soft-blue *S.* 'Photograph' were growing in ordinary gardens alongside perennials and shrubs.

The 1970s and 1980s brought the realisation that useful plants such as small-flowered asters could have a role in extending the season in new planting schemes. A single plant of the bushy *S. ericoides* 'Pink Cloud', with its delicate, heather-like foliage and pretty, pink flowers, can give a generous display, and a small group or even individual plant of the vibrant *cordifolium* hybrid *S.* 'Little Carlow' is more than worth the space, providing bright lavender-blue from early autumn. Alpine gardens or raised beds that have lost their vibrancy by autumn can be reawakened with the addition of the unique, prostrate, Beth Chatto introduction, *S. ericoides* var. *prostratum* 'Snow Flurry'. Fulfilling with ease its role in providing a long season of interest, *S. lateriflorum* 'Lady in Black' produces delicious, purple foliage in spring, becoming tinged with green as the dark stems lengthen. In autumn, each arching, bushy stem is covered in tiny, white flowers with purple centres. More subtle, but equally as effective, is the charming 'Rosy Veil'; as with all *S. ericoides*, it has dainty, heather-like leaves, but each stem develops a gentle arch before a multitude of pale-pink flowers open in autumn.

The recent interest in prairie-style planting has revived the naturalist ideal that suits small-flowered asters. Designer Piet Oudolf, a proponent of this style, has used a number of asters in his schemes, including the striking, purple-pink *S.* 'Ochtendgloren', which, like many with *S. pringlei* in their parentage, has its origins in the cut-flower trade. Another more modern cultivar that works well is *S.* 'Prairie Purple', whose upright sprays of lilac flowers from early autumn and purple-tinted foliage make a pretty splash. Older, but no less useful, *S.* 'Coombe Fishacre' forms a solid mass of pink, thanks to its stiff, bushy growth and free-flowering nature, which makes a superb contrast with grasses.

Small-flowered asters are a versatile group, no matter what form your garden takes. This, combined with new breeding, will likely fuel a further rise in popularity – and, as we all know, big is not necessarily better. □

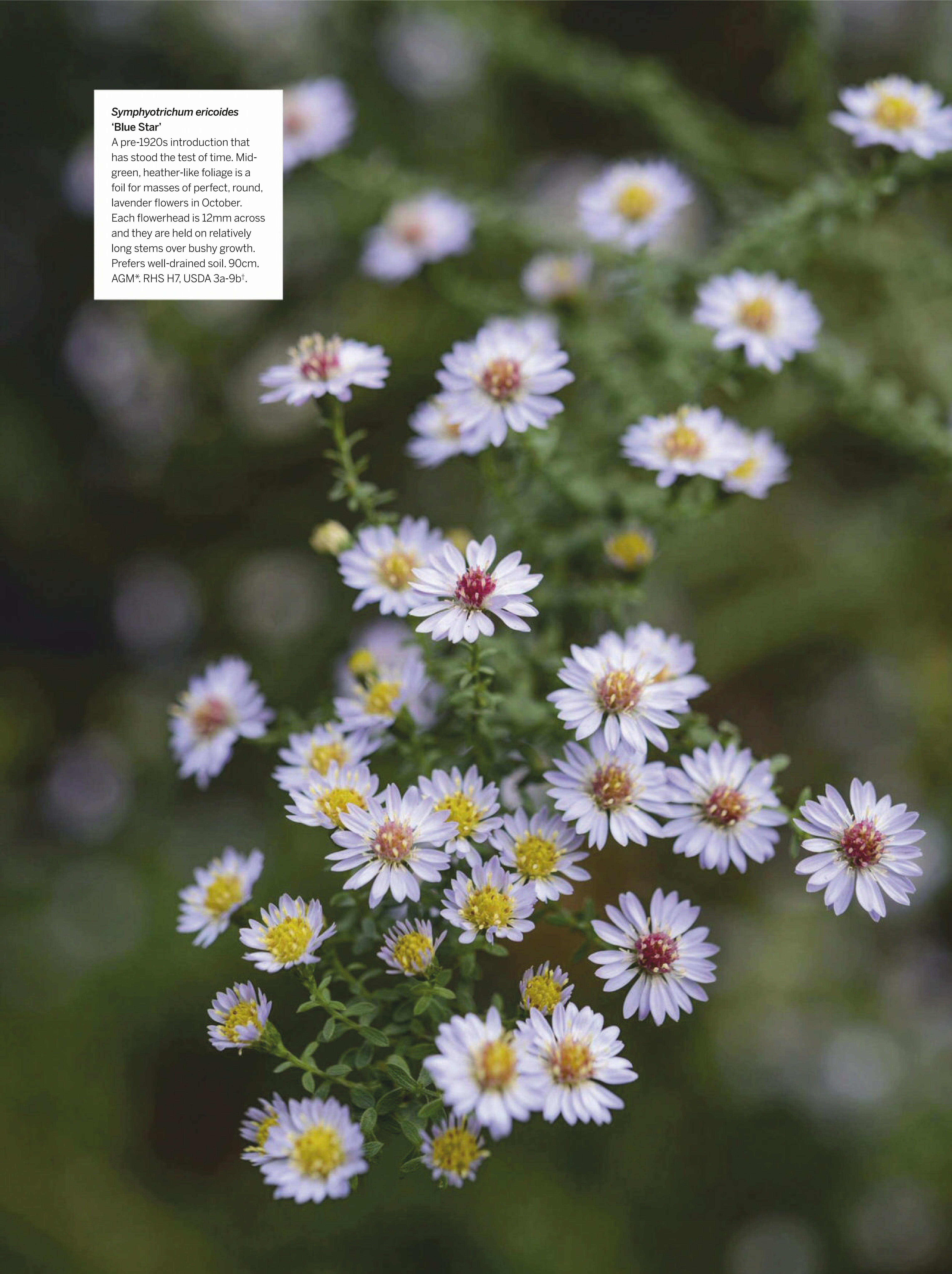
- Author Helen Picton runs Old Court Nurseries and The Picton Garden with her parents. Her recommendations for the best small-flowered asters can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

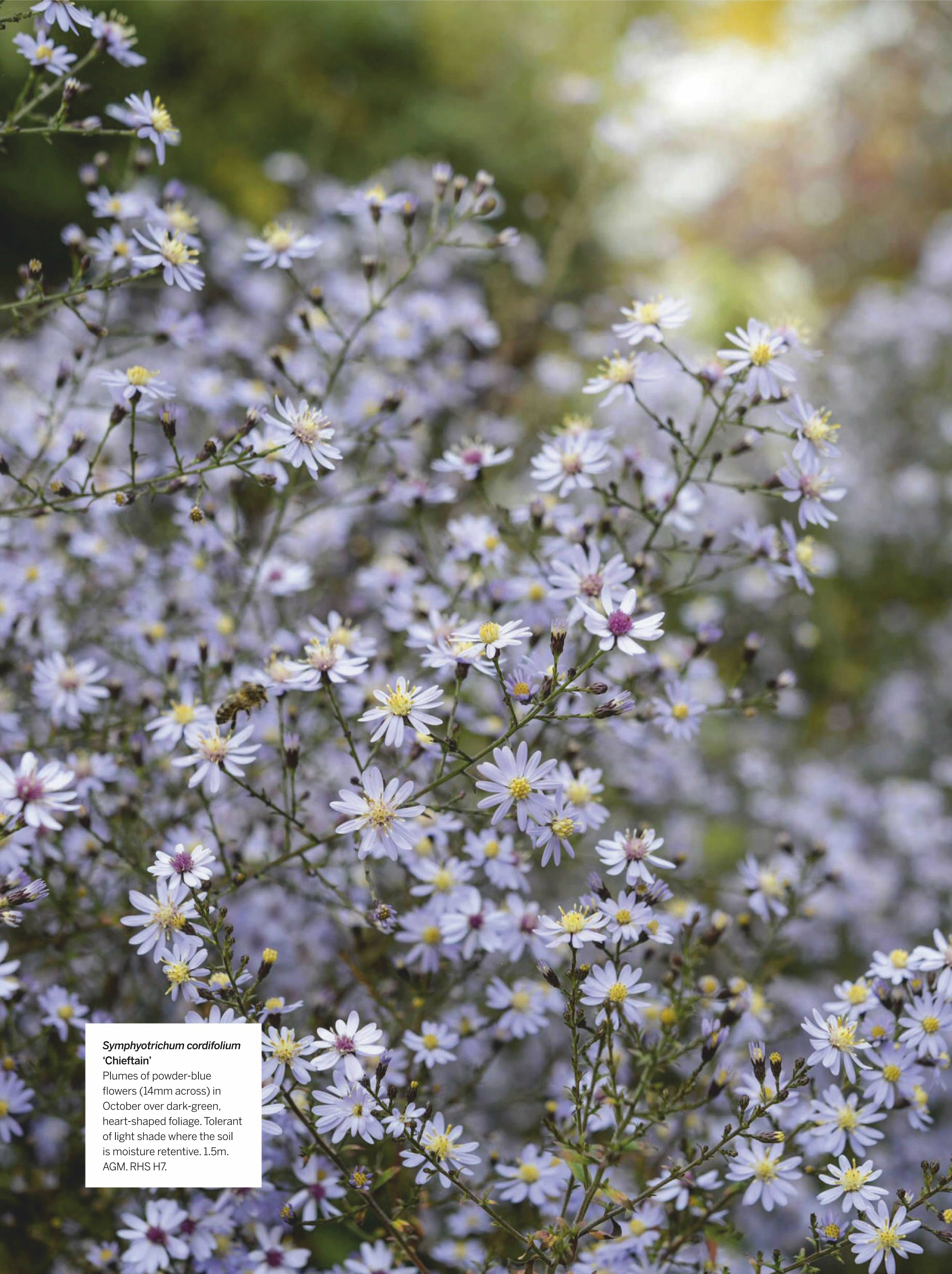
What Small-flowered asters are herbaceous, clump-forming perennial members of the Asteraceae family. They are drawn from five species, all part of the largely American genus *Symphyotrichum*, (previously *Aster*). They are distinguished through their flower size and profusion of blooms, along with their bushy habit. Flowers are 12mm to 25mm across, nearly all with only one row of 'petals', and carried in generous sprays. Foliage varies, from narrow, lance-shaped to broad, heart-shaped leaves.
Origins Native to the USA and southern Canada.
Season The main flowering period is from early to mid-autumn.
Size Height varies, from prostrate to 1.5m tall.
Conditions Best in sun or light shade in reasonable garden soil.
Hardiness Most have a hardiness rating of RHS H7, (tolerating temperatures to below −20°C) and are suitable for gardens in USDA 4a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

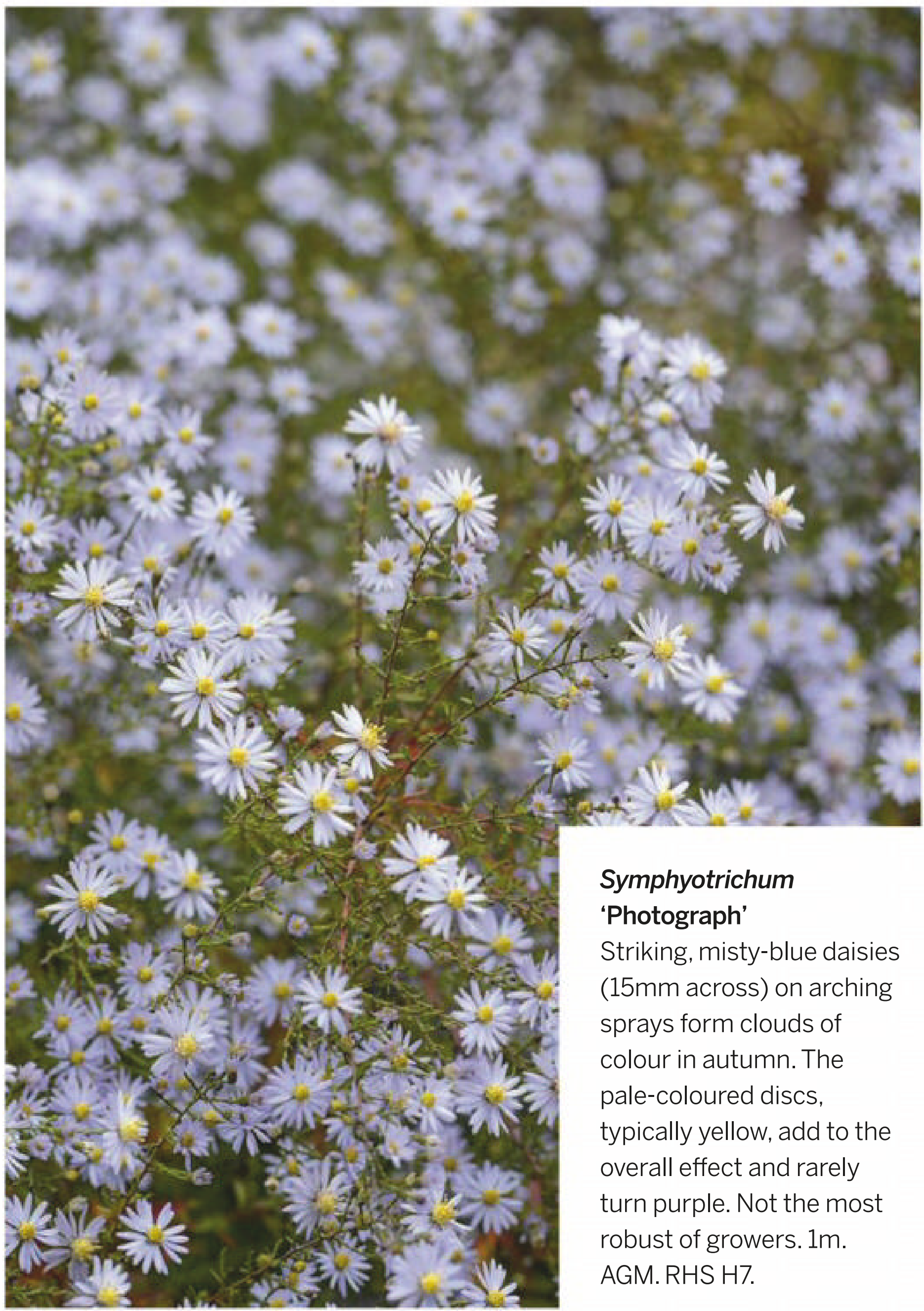
Old Court Nurseries
Old Court Nurseries and The Picton Garden in Worcestershire is home to the National Collection of autumn-flowering asters and related genera. Helen Picton, above, is the third generation of Pictons to work in nursery, which currently boasts more than 400 forms. Open from May to late October and for the NGS. **autumnasters.co.uk**



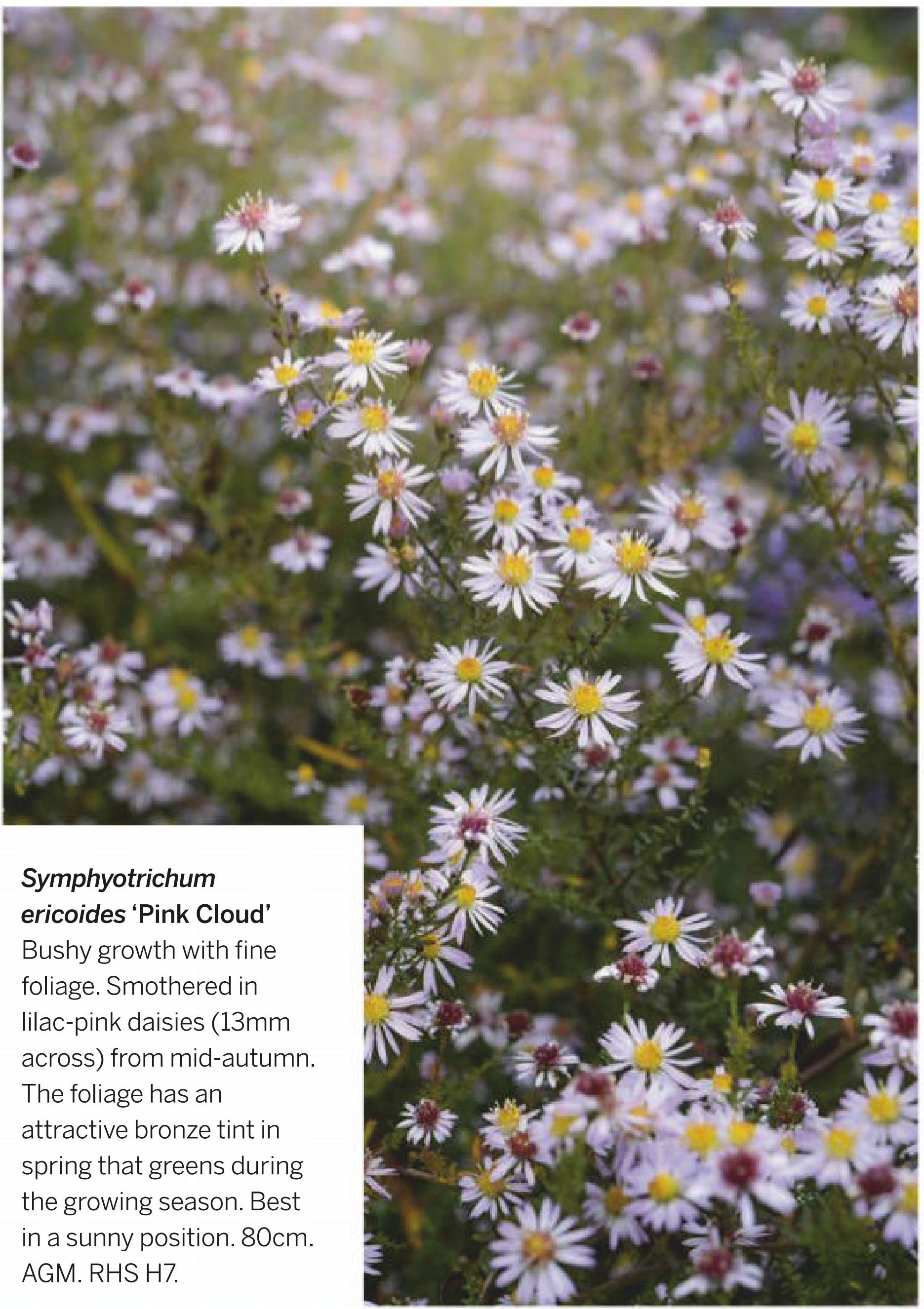
***Symphyotrichum ericoides* 'Blue Star'**
A pre-1920s introduction that has stood the test of time. Mid-green, heather-like foliage is a foil for masses of perfect, round, lavender flowers in October. Each flowerhead is 12mm across and they are held on relatively long stems over bushy growth. Prefers well-drained soil. 90cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b[†].



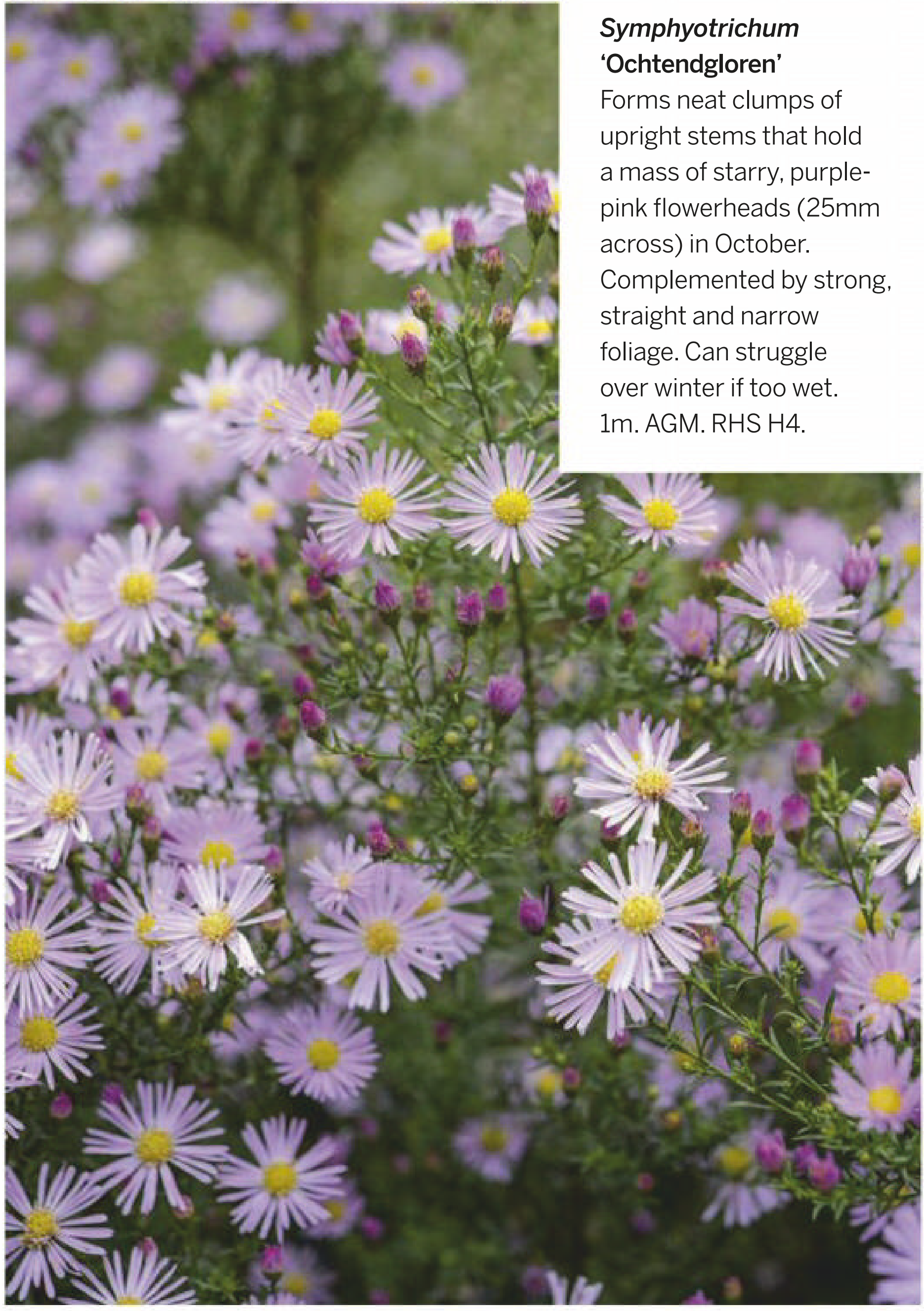
***Symphyotrichum cordifolium* 'Chieftain'**
Plumes of powder-blue flowers (14mm across) in October over dark-green, heart-shaped foliage. Tolerant of light shade where the soil is moisture retentive. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H7.



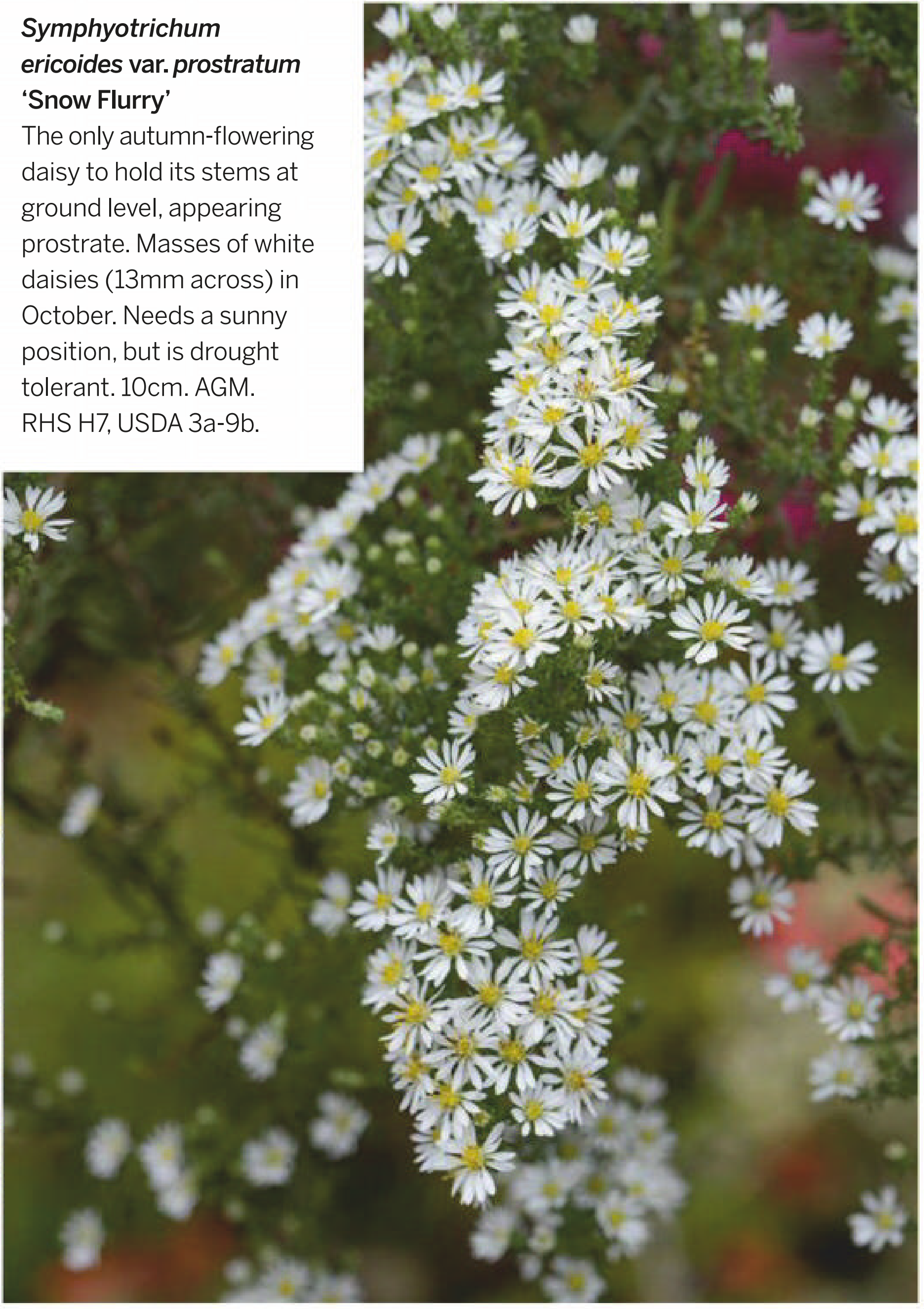
***Symphyotrichum* 'Photograph'**
Striking, misty-blue daisies (15mm across) on arching sprays form clouds of colour in autumn. The pale-coloured discs, typically yellow, add to the overall effect and rarely turn purple. Not the most robust of growers. 1m. AGM. RHS H7.



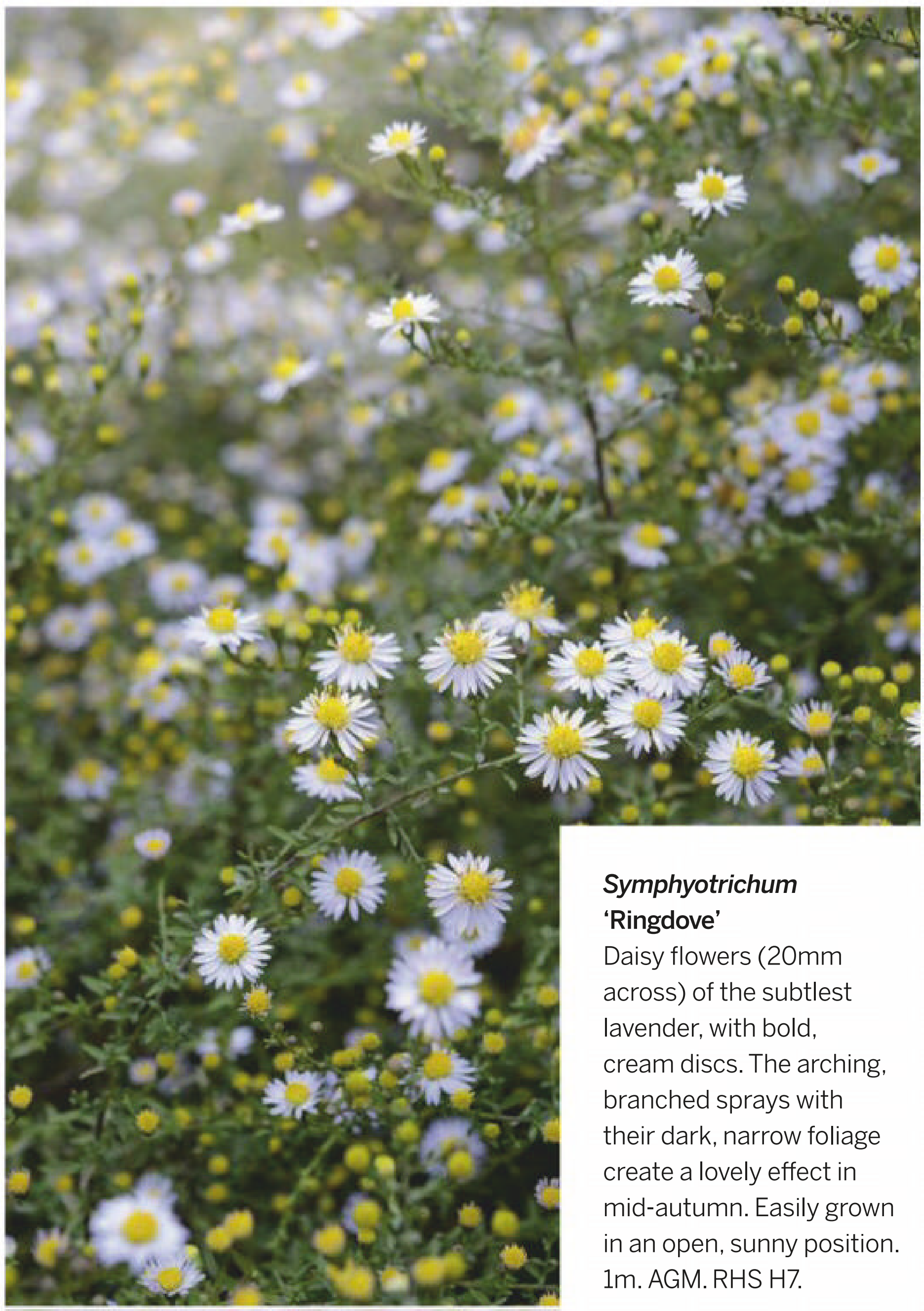
***Symphyotrichum ericoides* 'Pink Cloud'**
Bushy growth with fine foliage. Smothered in lilac-pink daisies (13mm across) from mid-autumn. The foliage has an attractive bronze tint in spring that greens during the growing season. Best in a sunny position. 80cm. AGM. RHS H7.



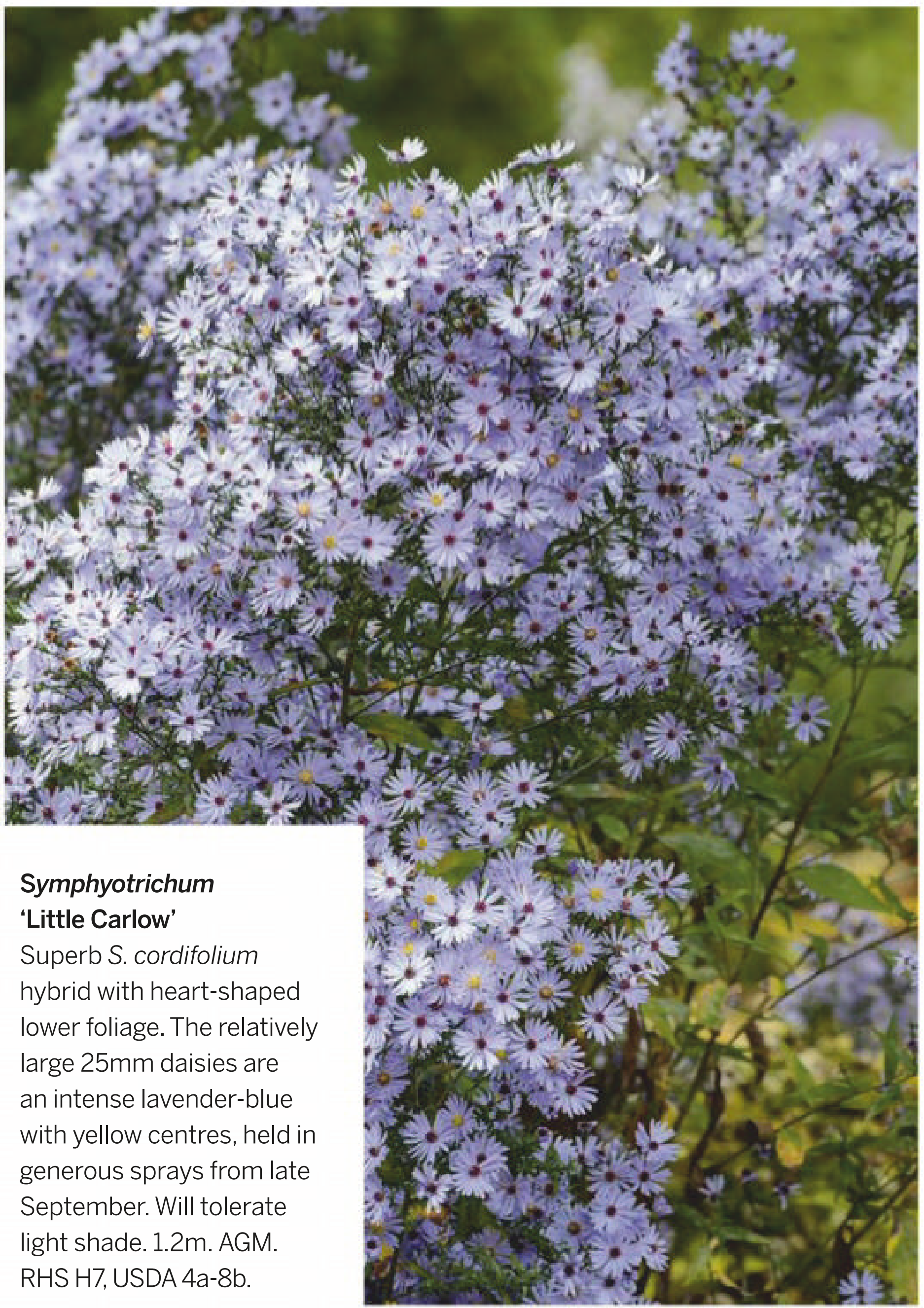
***Symphyotrichum* 'Ochtendgloren'**
Forms neat clumps of upright stems that hold a mass of starry, purple-pink flowerheads (25mm across) in October. Complemented by strong, straight and narrow foliage. Can struggle over winter if too wet. 1m. AGM. RHS H4.



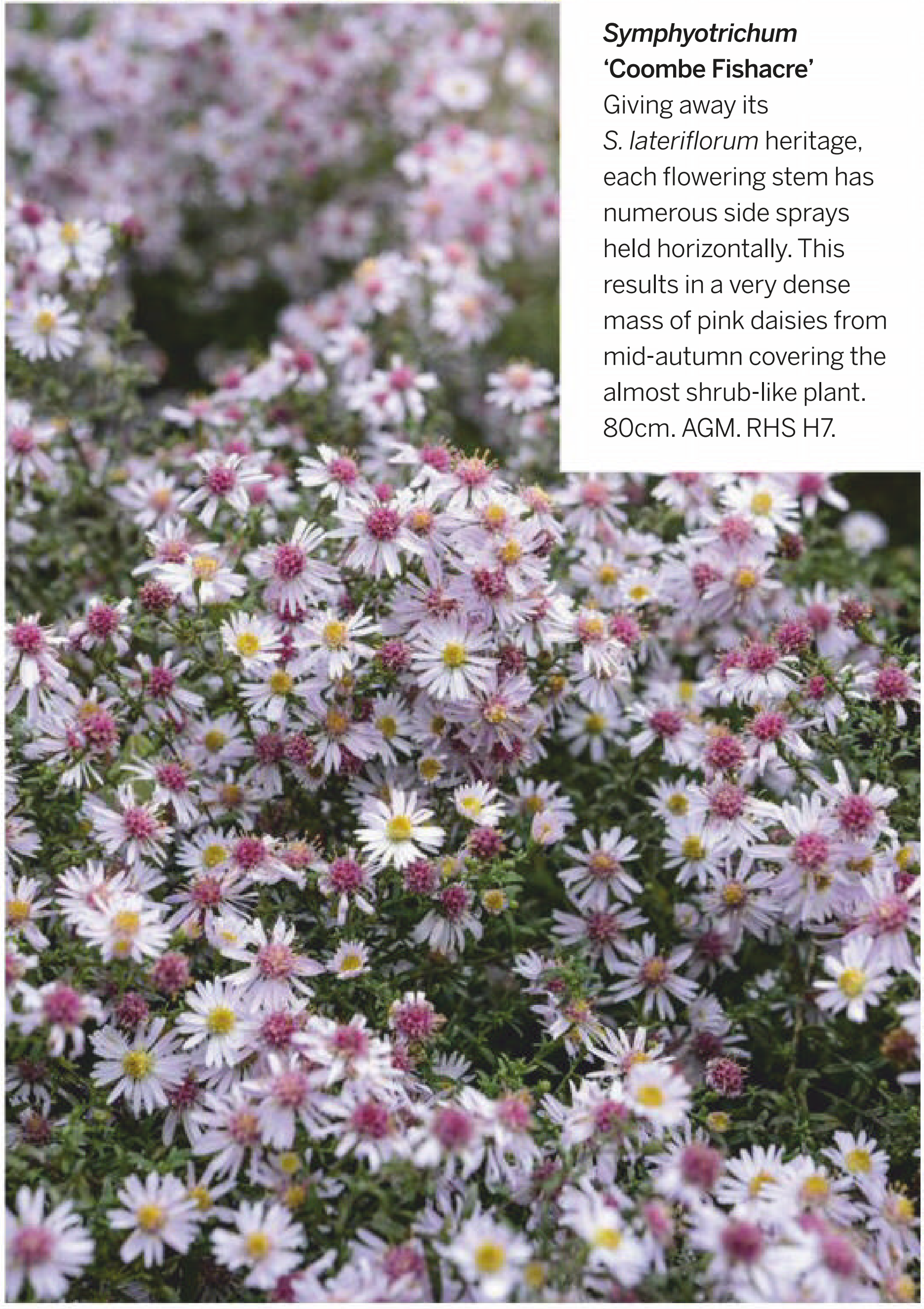
***Symphyotrichum ericoides* var. *prostratum* 'Snow Flurry'**
The only autumn-flowering daisy to hold its stems at ground level, appearing prostrate. Masses of white daisies (13mm across) in October. Needs a sunny position, but is drought tolerant. 10cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.



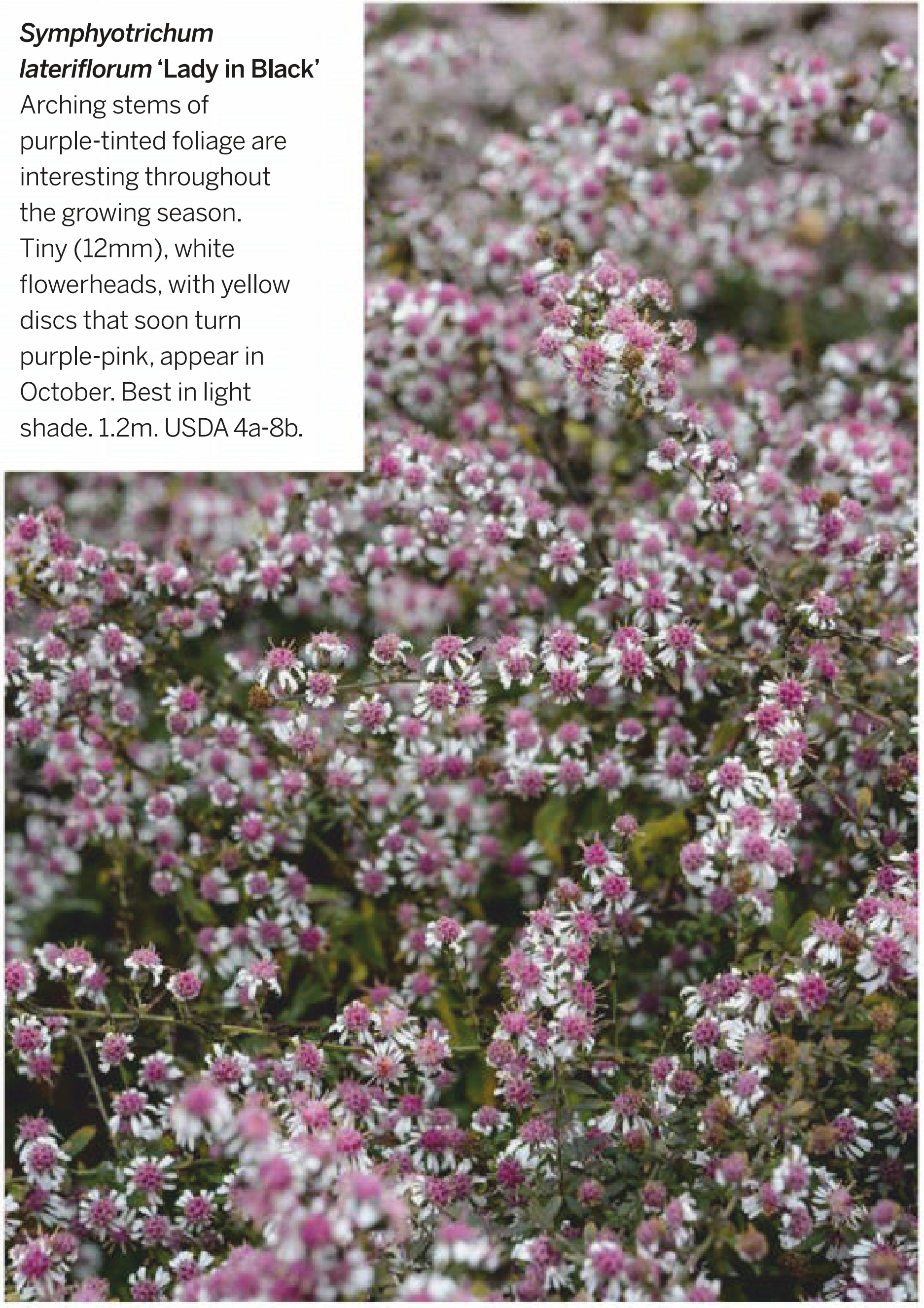
***Symphyotrichum* 'Ringdove'**
Daisy flowers (20mm across) of the subtlest lavender, with bold, cream discs. The arching, branched sprays with their dark, narrow foliage create a lovely effect in mid-autumn. Easily grown in an open, sunny position. 1m. AGM. RHS H7.



***Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow'**
Superb *S. cordifolium* hybrid with heart-shaped lower foliage. The relatively large 25mm daisies are an intense lavender-blue with yellow centres, held in generous sprays from late September. Will tolerate light shade. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.



***Symphyotrichum* 'Coombe Fishacre'**
Giving away its *S. lateriflorum* heritage, each flowering stem has numerous side sprays held horizontally. This results in a very dense mass of pink daisies from mid-autumn covering the almost shrub-like plant. 80cm. AGM. RHS H7.



***Symphyotrichum lateriflorum* 'Lady in Black'**
Arching stems of purple-tinted foliage are interesting throughout the growing season. Tiny (12mm), white flowerheads, with yellow discs that soon turn purple-pink, appear in October. Best in light shade. 1.2m. USDA 4a-8b.

***Symphyotrichum ericoides* 'Cinderella'**
Upright sprays of tiny, white flowerheads (12mm across) with strikingly prominent, golden discs make this plant a showy addition to the autumn garden. The overall plant is compact and bushy. Will tolerate light shade. 75cm.

***Symphyotrichum* 'Prairie Purple'**
The hairy, heart-shaped foliage and stems are dark purple, creating the perfect backdrop for the spires of lilac-purple flowerheads (13mm across). Flowering from early autumn, this has one of the longest flowering seasons. 1.3m. RHS H7.

MANY THANKS TO OLD COURT NURSERIES AND THE PICTON GARDEN IN WORCESTERSHIRE, WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN

Cultivation

Small-flowered asters flourish in good, humus-rich garden soils and will tolerate and even thrive in poorer soils as long as they do not dry out too much in hot conditions or get waterlogged in winter. Winter drainage is particularly important to those plants with *S. pringlei* in their heritage such as 'Ochtendgloren', which, in suitable conditions, will be hardy below -10°C. Good light is important for the best flowering, but many such as 'Chieftain' or *S. lateriflorum* will tolerate partial shade – that is, light, dappled shade from deciduous shrubs (not heavy evergreens). In very hot, dry conditions, *S. ericoides* cultivars such as 'Blue Star' are often the toughest. *S. cordifolium* cultivars and hybrids such as 'Little Carlow' enjoy a bit more moisture.

Most species and cultivars show good levels of resistance to powdery mildew, but this does vary. In general, those with rougher foliage are less susceptible to mildew than those with very smooth foliage, but in very hot, dry conditions it can appear on some plants. To reduce the risk, apply a good mulch in the spring to slow down the rate of water loss and divide the plants on a fairly regular basis. Remove any diseased foliage as soon as you see it to prevent spread.

As well as improving the health and vigour of the plant, division is the easiest way to propagate small-flowered asters. Lift clumps for division every three to five years in spring, removing any old and woody material, and replanting or potting up the divided sections. While most small-flowered asters are relatively untroubled by pests, it is worth watching out for slugs in early spring on young, clump-forming plants that are slow to establish, such as 'Photograph'.

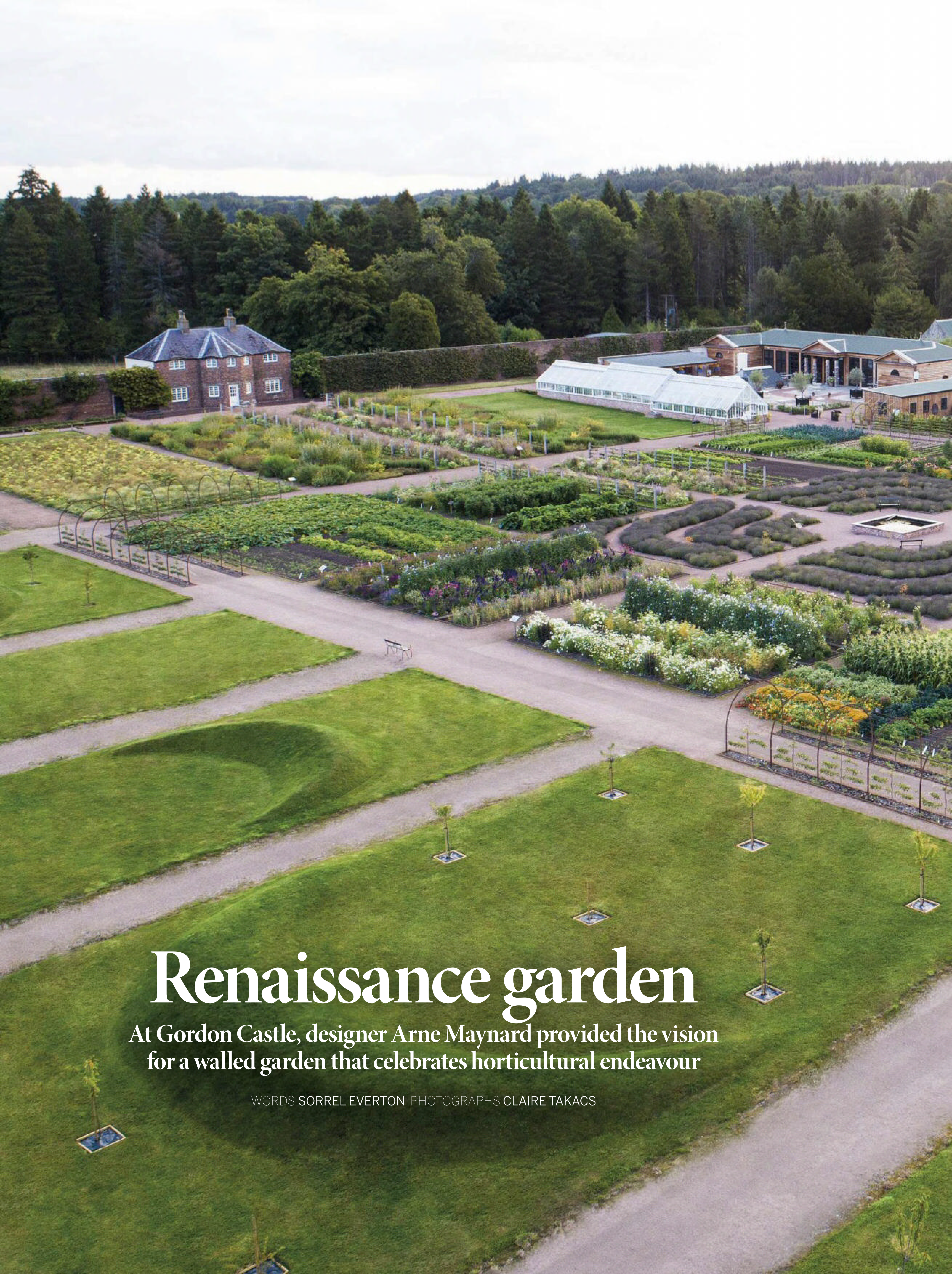
In borders, small-flowered asters, particularly those with coloured foliage, such as 'Lady in Black', combine well with spring bulbs – the purple colouring acts as a foil for pale-flowered bulbs, such as *Tulipa linifolia* 'Bright Gem'. Some forms make excellent border edging, for example, *S. lateriflorum* var. *horizontale* as in the Peacock Garden at Great Dixter, where it is used as a pseudo-hedge. Combined with other herbaceous plants and shrubs, they are invaluable for extending the season, the pastels helping to bring the rich autumn colours of *Cotinus* and *Acer* to an ever-more striking crescendo. Combined with grasses, they can add a charming pop of colour and an important change in texture.

In raised beds and hanging baskets, the prostrate 'Snow Flurry' will happily trail over the edges. Growing small-flowered asters in garden borders may be the most common form of cultivation, but many can also be easily grown in containers, extending the season for terrace displays. The slightly shorter, busier forms tend to excel in a generous container. Importantly, almost all make excellent cut flowers – so we can enjoy a little bit of autumn beauty in the house as well.

Where to see and buy

- **Larch Cottage Nurseries**
  Melkinthorpe, Penrith,
  Cumbria CA10 2DR.
  Tel 01931 712404,
  larchcottage.co.uk
- **Norwell Nurseries**
  Woodhouse Road, Norwell,
  Newark, Nottinghamshire
  NG23 6JX.
  Tel 01636 636337,
  norwellnurseries.co.uk
- **Old Court Nurseries***
  Walwyn Road,
  Colwall, Malvern,
  Worcestershire WR13 6QE.
  Tel 01684 540416,
  autumnasters.co.uk
- **Sussex Prairie Garden**
  Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf
  Road, West Sussex BN5 9AT.
  Tel 01273 495902,
  sussexprairies.co.uk
- **Upton House and Gardens***
  Nr Banbury, Warwickshire
  OX15 6HT.
  Tel 01295 670266,
  nationaltrust.org

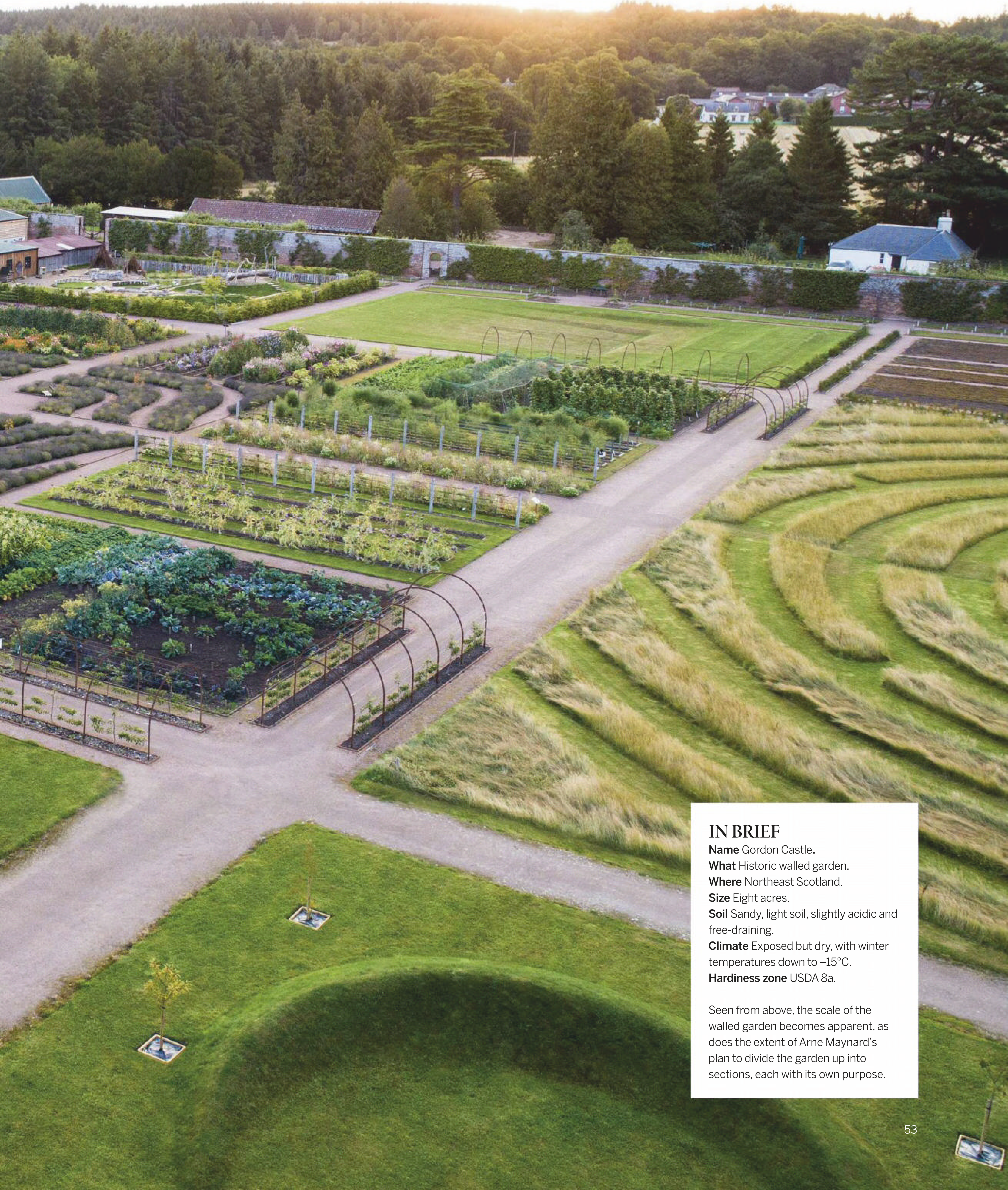
*National Collection holders



Renaissance garden

At Gordon Castle, designer Arne Maynard provided the vision for a walled garden that celebrates horticultural endeavour

WORDS SORREL EVERTON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS



IN BRIEF

Name Gordon Castle**.**
What Historic walled garden.
Where Northeast Scotland.
Size Eight acres.
Soil Sandy, light soil, slightly acidic and free-draining.
Climate Exposed but dry, with winter temperatures down to –15°C.
Hardiness zone USDA 8a.

Seen from above, the scale of the walled garden becomes apparent, as does the extent of Arne Maynard's plan to divide the garden up into sections, each with its own purpose.

The story of the walled garden is a familiar one – from heyday in the 1800s through decades of decline to more often than not being left abandoned. And yet, there is something about the history, location, practicality and opportunity these spaces offer that makes them irresistible to renovation and revival. But what if that walled garden is a vast, eight-acre plot? Where, as current owners of Gordon Castle Angus and Zara Gordon Lennox wondered, do you start in bringing such a huge, blank space back to life?

Dating back to 1470, Gordon Castle began as a fortress for the influential Gordon clan. It was extended by the 5th Duke of Gordon into a vast, neoclassical mansion with a surrounding landscape of parterres, avenues and canals, along with a large walled garden. Here was a clear statement of import, requiring a fortune to run; in the 1850s, the garden staff alone numbered 40.

Following decades were not so glorious, more recently relying for survival on the popularity of its salmon fishing on the nearby River Spey, while its walled garden was turned over to commercial raspberry growing, supplying local food manufacturer Baxters, located alongside the castle in Fochabers.

In 2008 the estate became Angus and wife Zara's home, and it was clear that a plan was needed. "We wanted a whole vision that we could work to over the years," explains Zara. "Something that made the estate part of our lives." Having renovated the castle, they turned their attention to the garden – and eight blank acres, more akin to a windy field than a traditional walled garden. But while the field had been left to go fallow, the walls, an estimated one million bricks' worth, were still lined with fruit trees that had been maintained by former head gardener Willie Robertson from 1948 right through to just a few years ago – 259 trees, including plums, apricots, figs and apples, some dating back hundreds of years.

And it was here that Gordon Castle's new vision began – as a showcase for the growing and using of seasonal produce. To give the idea cohesion, Angus and Zara called in designer Arne Maynard. "The brief to Arne," explains Zara, "was that we wanted a design for the next 100 years, and one that was totally in keeping with the ethos of a working, productive kitchen garden."

Arne's plan created a series of smaller, more manageable sections, each with its own purpose. Entering the garden from the new café, you start at the vegetable beds. Produce is focused on what the café needs and where possible uses heritage or Scottish cultivars known to succeed in the area. Cut-flower sections are divided into four colour schemes: Scotch Thistle in pinks and blues; Icy Glen with cooler blues, whites and greens; Golden Peat, hot colours with contrasting dark purples; and Glowing Heather in pinks and pastels.

At the centre of the garden is a newly constructed dipping pond surrounded by 3,000 lavender plants. Although laid out aesthetically the lavender is another crop – used to produce essential oil. Leading away from here, the pathway along the central access is lined with borders, the dimensions of which are the only element that Arne retained from the garden's original layout.

As you reach the outer areas, Arne has taken a more varied approach. "The design was completely dependent on plants," he says. "Instead of hard landscaping, we have used playful planted structures, such as a mown maze and raised landform ribbons to draw people around the garden." A cherry orchard has been planted around the landforms, while another section is a quince meadow with an underplanting of wildflowers. The mown grass maze lends the garden a quieter, less managed appeal.

Two further sections include an inverted landform creating a performance space and a soft-fruit area. "We're keen for raspberries," says Ed, somewhat ironically given the garden's history. "As well as for use in our own products, I'm talking to Baxters about growing 'Morning Jewel' for its signature jams." Mr Baxter was one of the original gardeners here and used to take spare produce home for his wife to make into jams and soups, so it seems only right that the connection is revived.

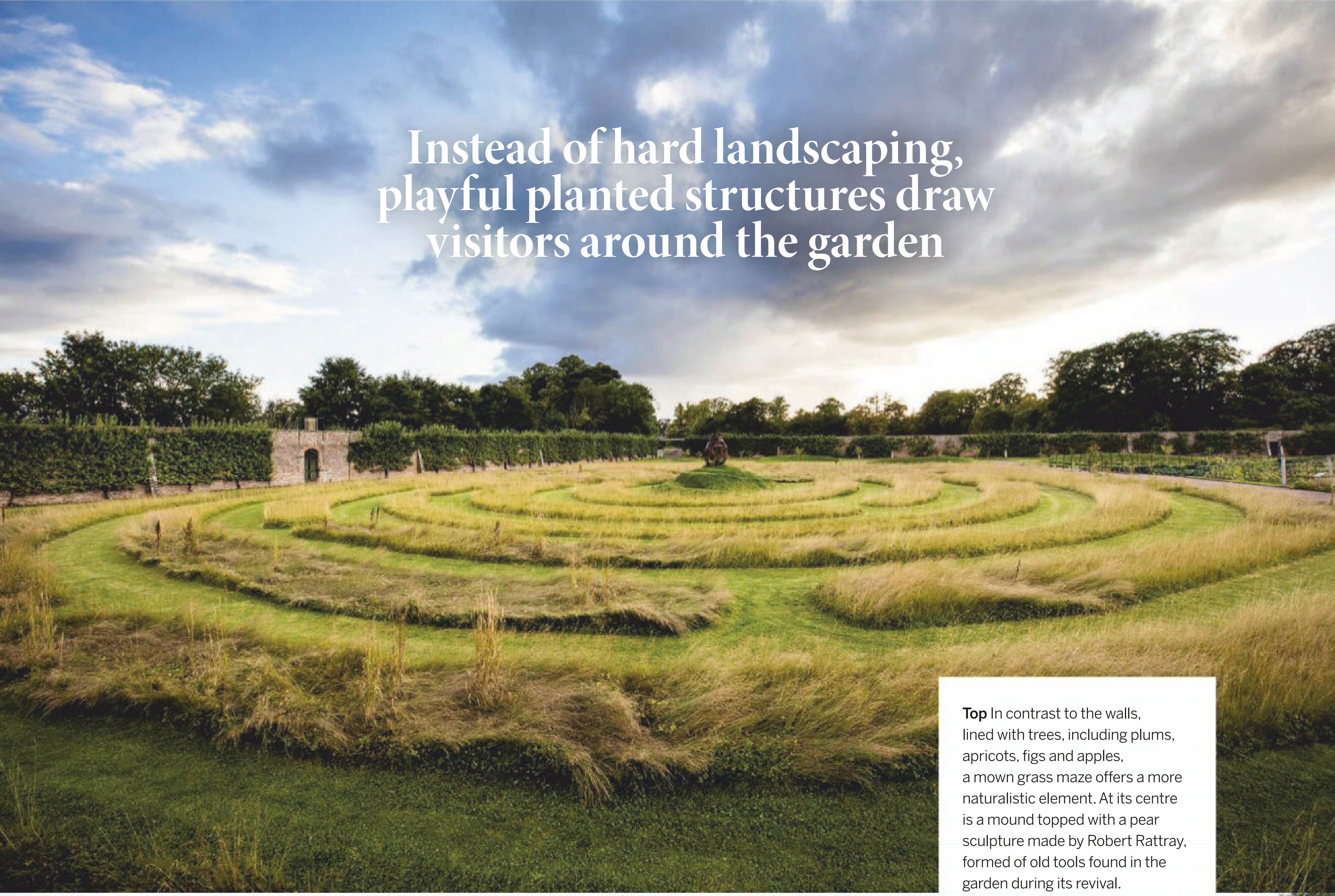
Every element here aims to balance a working garden with a garden that looks good. "Visitors are key but the garden has to work really hard, so it's making sure it doesn't just look like a huge allotment, but somewhere that people want to visit," notes Ed. There's a lot of numbers involved in understanding this garden and its sheer scale, but its appeal is twofold. First, we are invited to watch its revival grow – quite literally – section by section, and second, the design is approachable and varied enough to engage gardeners and enthusiasts alike. The renaissance of the walled garden is in good hands at Gordon Castle. □

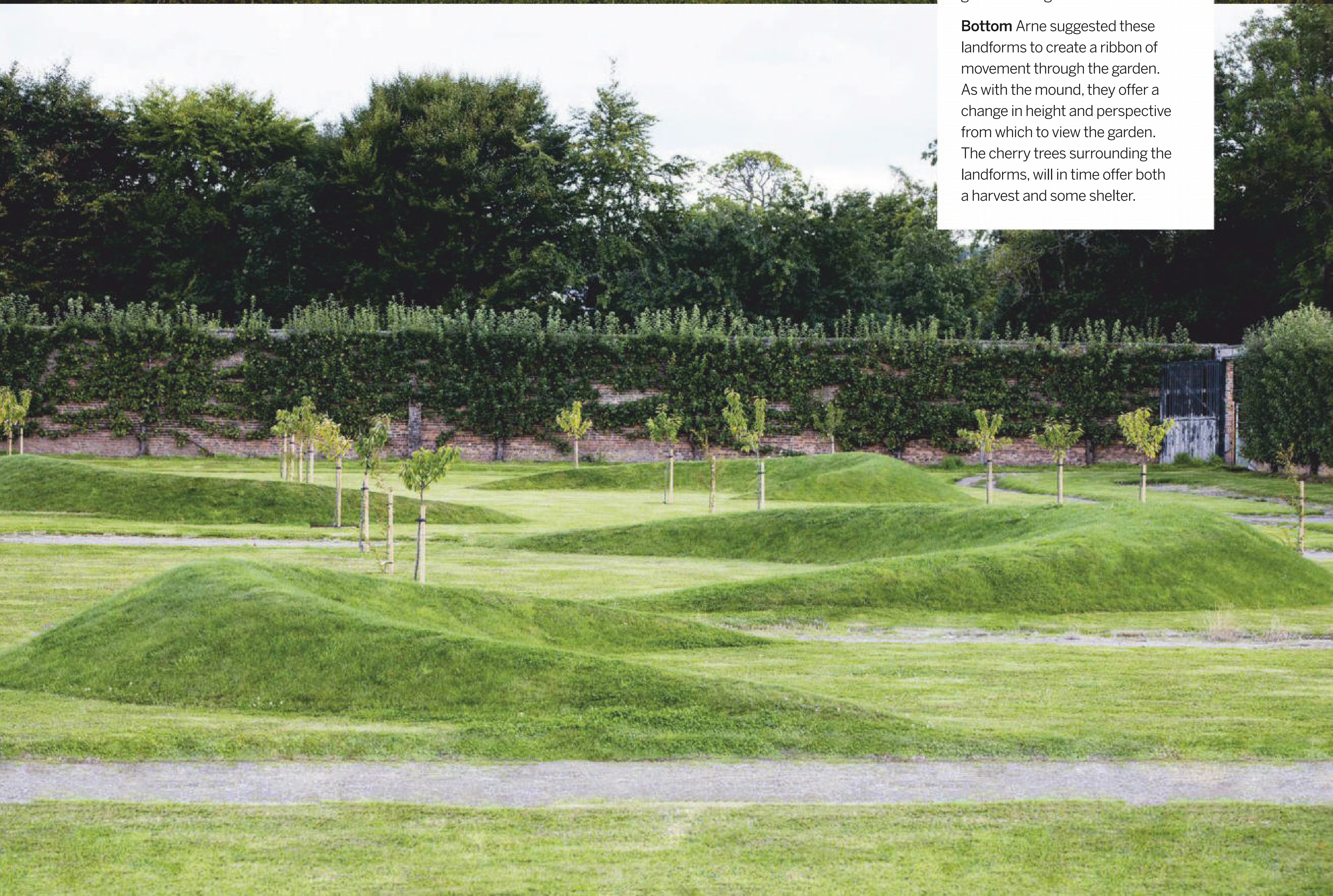
USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Gordon Castle Walled Garden, Fochabers, Morayshire IV32 7PQ.
Tel 01343 612312 **Web** gordoncastle.co.uk
Open The Walled Garden is open daily from 10am-4pm, entry from £3.
Included in the ticket price is a guided tour with one of the gardeners. See website for details.

See more planting designs at Gordon Castle over the next five pages.

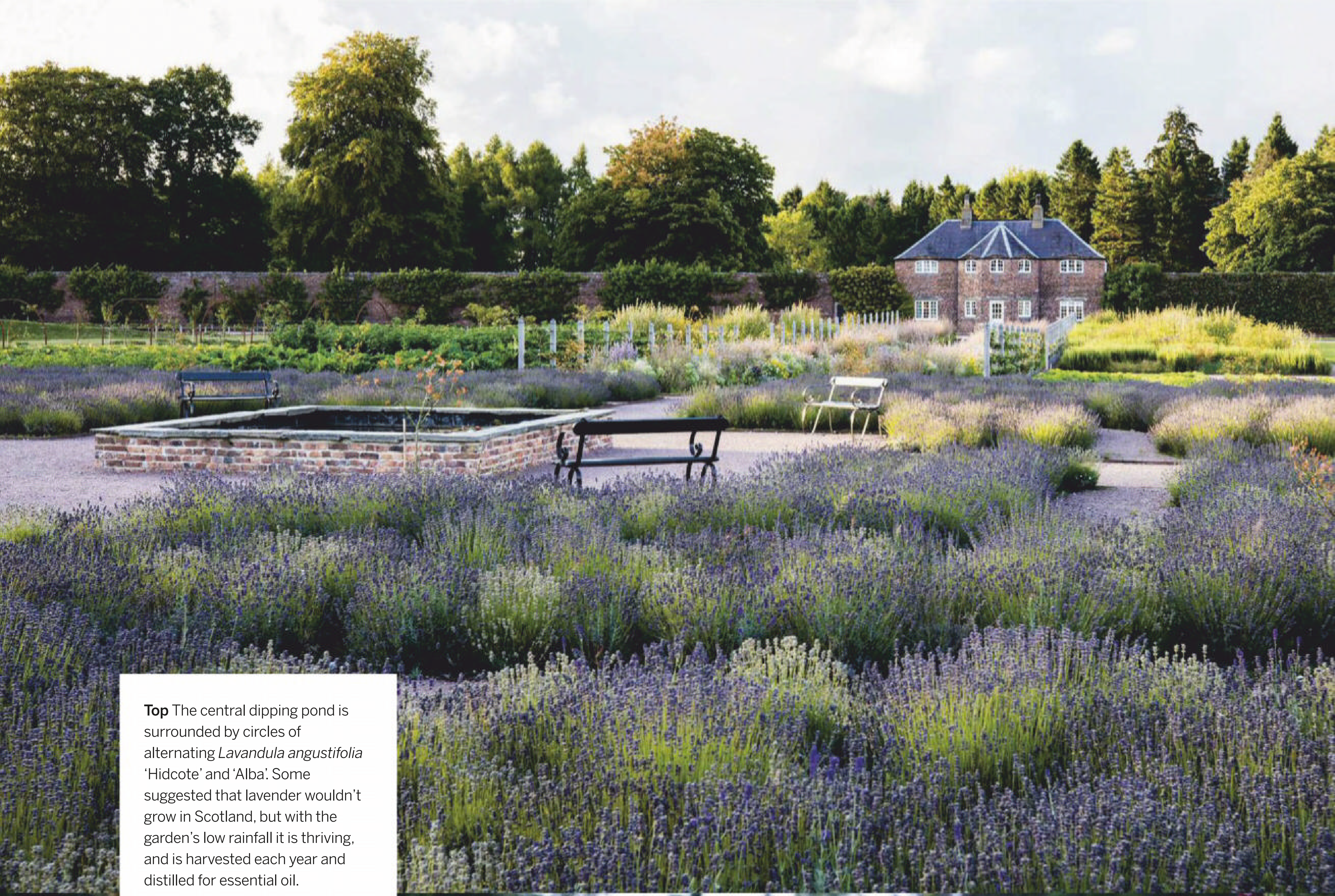
Instead of hard landscaping, playful planted structures draw visitors around the garden

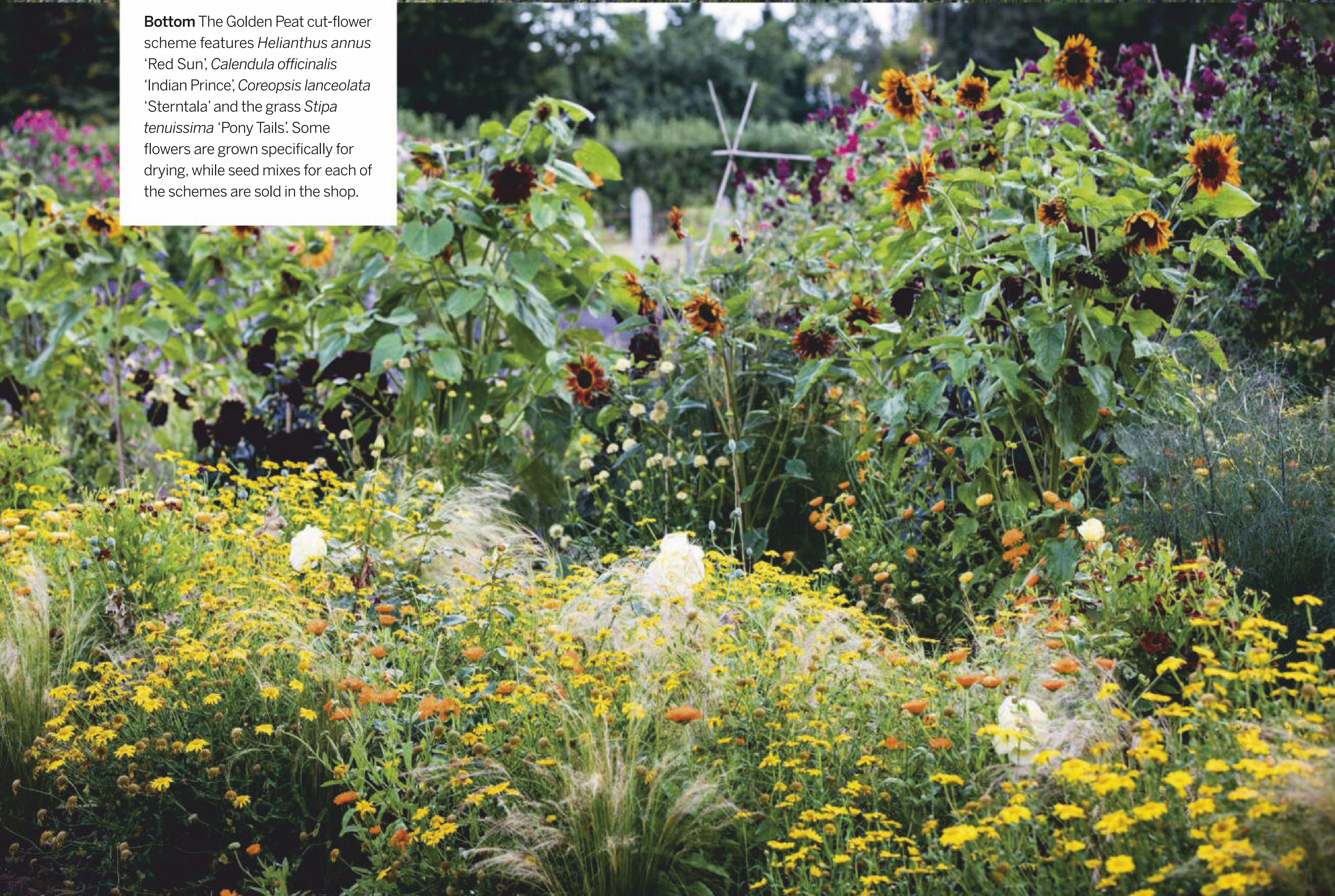




Top In contrast to the walls, lined with trees, including plums, apricots, figs and apples, a mown grass maze offers a more naturalistic element. At its centre is a mound topped with a pear sculpture made by Robert Rattray, formed of old tools found in the garden during its revival.

Bottom Arne suggested these landforms to create a ribbon of movement through the garden. As with the mound, they offer a change in height and perspective from which to view the garden. The cherry trees surrounding the landforms, will in time offer both a harvest and some shelter.





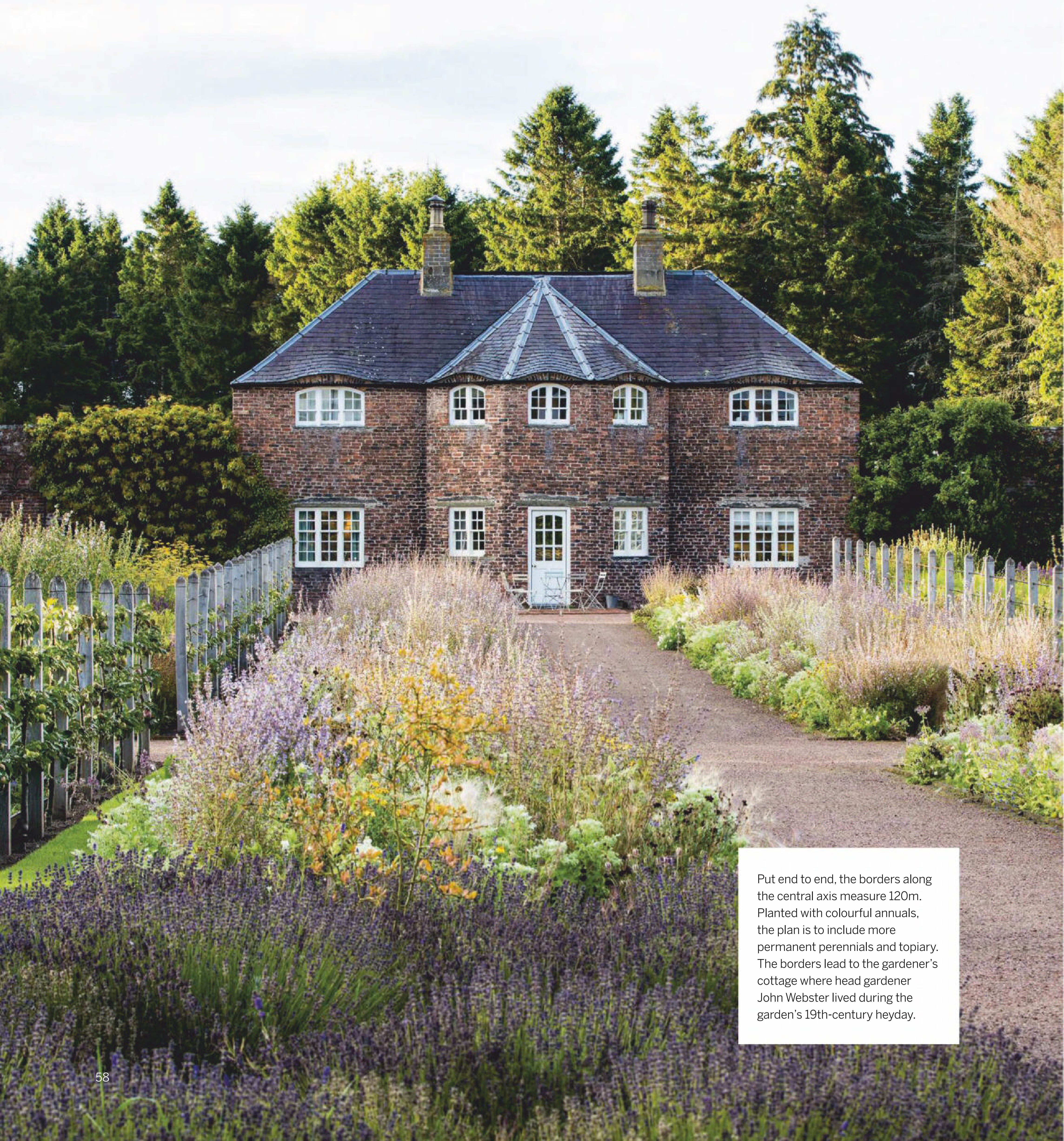
Top The central dipping pond is surrounded by circles of alternating *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote' and 'Alba'. Some suggested that lavender wouldn't grow in Scotland, but with the garden's low rainfall it is thriving, and is harvested each year and distilled for essential oil.

Bottom The Golden Peat cut-flower scheme features *Helianthus annus* 'Red Sun', *Calendula officinalis* 'Indian Prince', *Coreopsis lanceolata* 'Sterntala' and the grass *Stipa tenuissima* 'Pony Tails'. Some flowers are grown specifically for drying, while seed mixes for each of the schemes are sold in the shop.

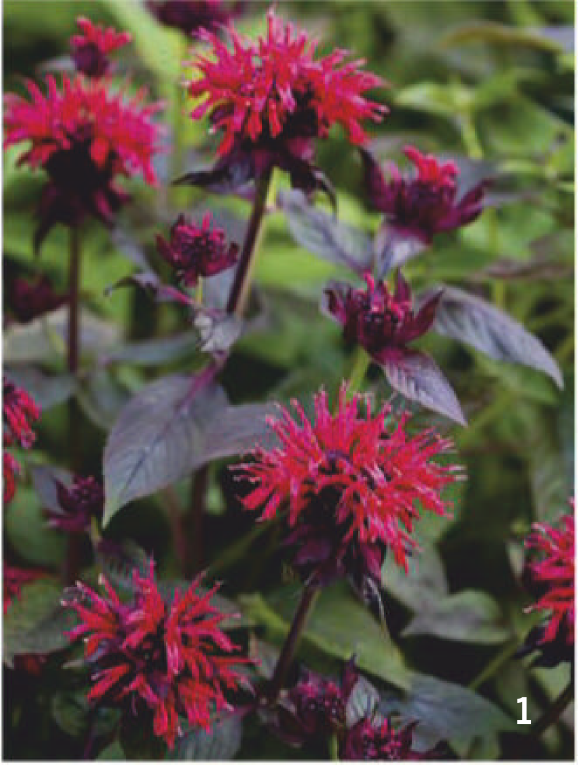
Top Cut flowers are used for the estate's cottages, the castle and the café, and are also offered as pick your own to florists and sold to visitors. The Glowing Heather colour scheme feature pinks and pastels, including *Nicotiana mutabilis*, *Dahlia* 'Vassio Meggos' and scented sweet peas.

Bottom Salads, such as lettuces 'Matador' and 'Green Salad Bowl', are one of the most important crops, providing regular pickings. They are grown as 'cut and come again' so as to avoid gaps in the rows. Sixty-four apple cultivars are grown as espaliers and step-overs lining the garden's pathways.

> We wanted a forward-looking design, but one that reflected the ethos of a working, productive kitchen garden



Put end to end, the borders along the central axis measure 120m. Planted with colourful annuals, the plan is to include more permanent perennials and topiary. The borders lead to the gardener's cottage where head gardener John Webster lived during the garden's 19th-century heyday.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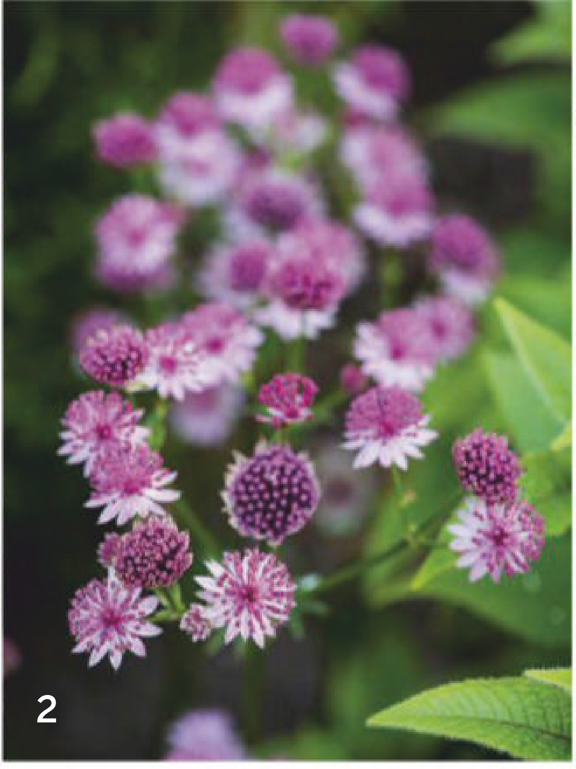
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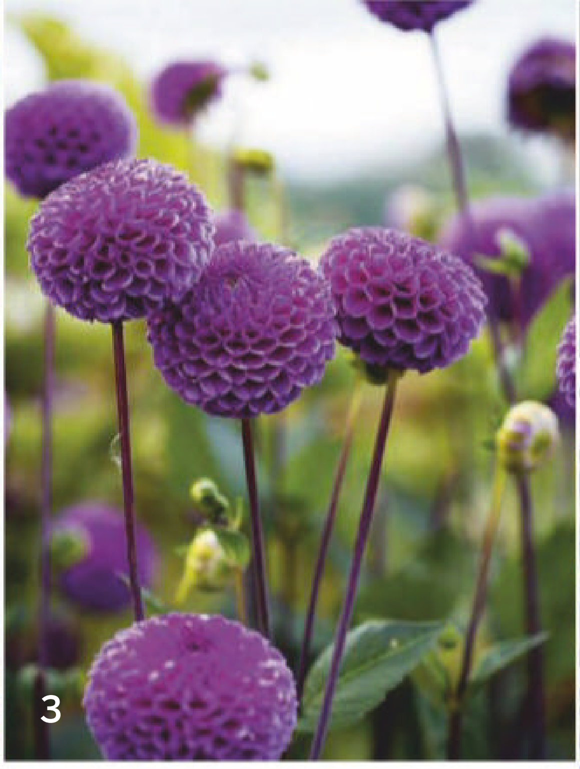
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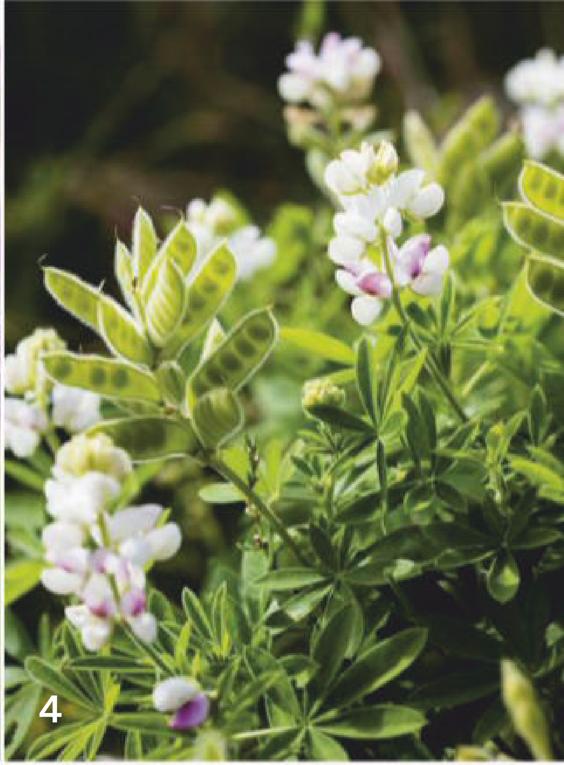
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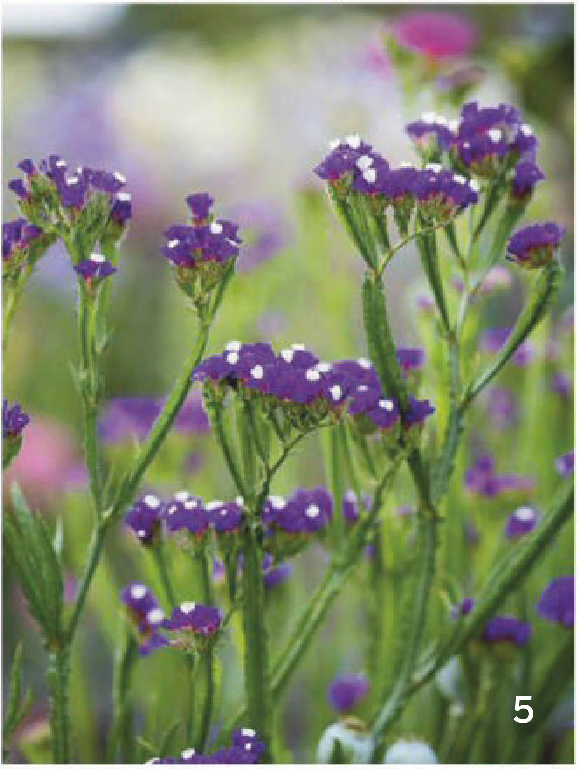
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12 PLANTS FROM THE CUTTING BEDS

1 ***Monarda*** **Panorama Series** Clump-forming perennial with aromatic leaves topped by whorled flowers in shades of pink, magenta, red and white. Also known as bee balm, *Monarda* is great for pollinators. 90cm. RHS H4, USDA 4a-9b[†].

2 ***Astrantia*** **'Roma'** Long-flowering *Astrantia*, with pin-cushion flowers in soft pink. This is a good, vigorous cultivar with long stems well suited to cutting. Happy in sun or partially shaded spots. 60cm. AGM[*]. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

3 ***Dahlia*** **'Franz Kafka'** No cutting garden is complete without a selection of dahlias. This is a pompom cultivar with small, tight heads in a pinky mauve around 7.5cm across. 80cm. RHS H3. USDA 8a-10b.

4 ***Lupinus nanus*** **'Snow Pixie'** Although technically a perennial, Gordon Castle grow this lovely little lupin from seed every year. Fast-growing and reliable, it forms compact mounds of delicate, pink-and-white, fragrant flowers spikes, perfect for the front of a border. 45cm.

5 ***Limonium sinuatum*** The real value of sea lavender is as a dried flower that retains it colour and form well. Best cut just before flowers fully open. 60cm. USDA 8a-10b.

6 ***Scabiosa atropurpurea*** **'Beaujolais Bonnets'** Strong, long stems make these a good cutting-flower selection. The centres of the flowers are a deep, wine-red colour studded with contrasting white stamens and surrounded by ruffled petals in paler pink. Best grown in full sun. 60cm. USDA 7a-9b.

7 ***Daucus carota*** **'Dara'** Flowering in a range of colours from pure white to pink and dark purple, wild carrot is a great addition to larger flower arrangements, with long stems and large umbel-shaped flowers followed by wonderfully intricate seedheads. 1.2m.

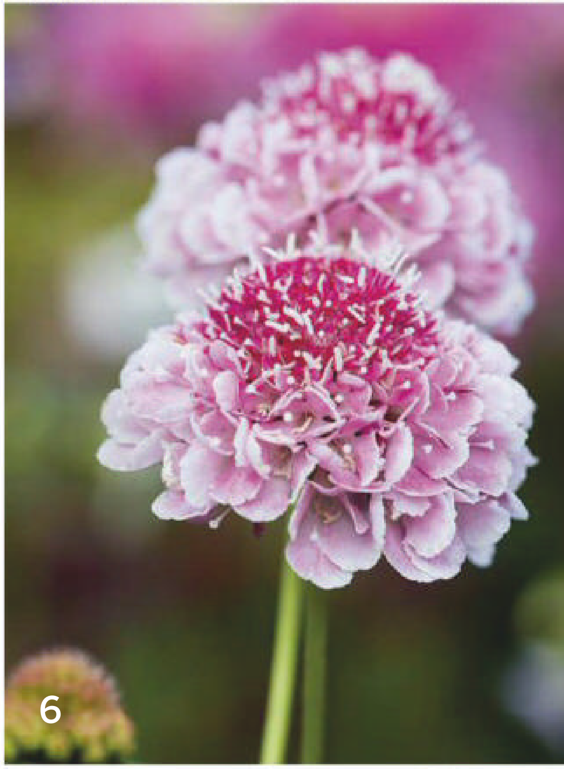
8 ***Craspedia globosa*** Also known as billy buttons or drumsticks, this is a real star of the cut-flower garden, the saffron-yellow, drumstick-like flowers will last for weeks when cut fresh, or months if dried. A hardy perennial that can withstand even the harshest Scottish winter. 90cm. USDA 8a-11.

9 ***Dahlia*** **'Waterlily Lilac'** Resembling a waterlily in size and shape, this is a lovely shade of pinky-lilac. 80cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

10 ***Scorzonera hispanica*** **'Long Black Maxima'** Perhaps more typically grown as a vegetable for its root (grown and cooked like salsify), here it is grown for its flower too. A member of the dandelion family, there are similarities in the flowers, but this cultivar is a gorgeous, rich purple. 30cm.

11 ***Echium vulgare*** **'Blue Bedder'** A compact, bushy, hardy annual, that flowers profusely throughout the summer on well-drained soil in full sun. The blooms emerge deep violet-blue and become tinged with mauve as they mature. Great for pollinators. 40cm. AGM. RHS H7. USDA 4a-8b.

12 ***Dahlia*** **'Classic Swanlake'** Semi-double flowers in a creamy white. Both the leaves and stems have a purple tinge to the dark green. 90cm. RHS H3. USDA 8a-10b.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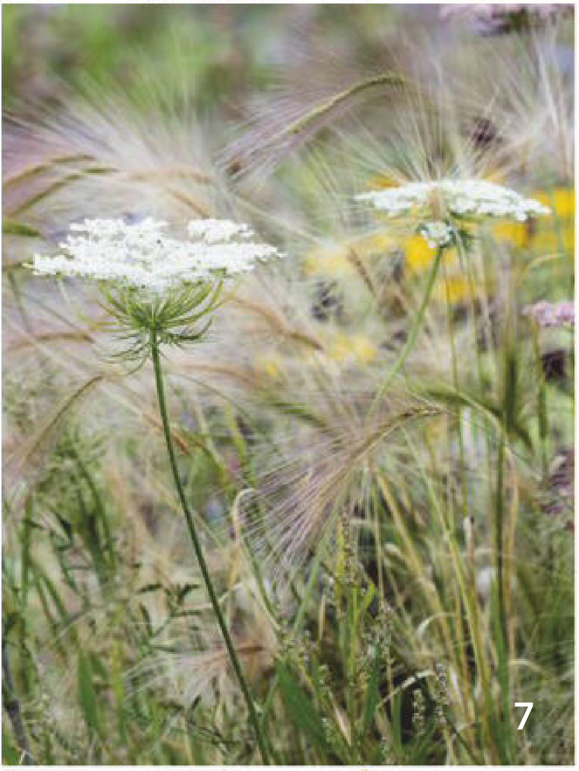
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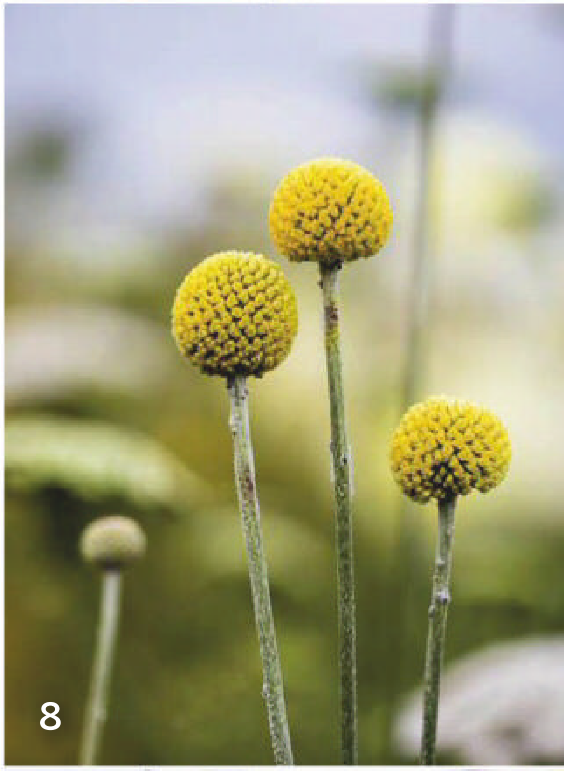
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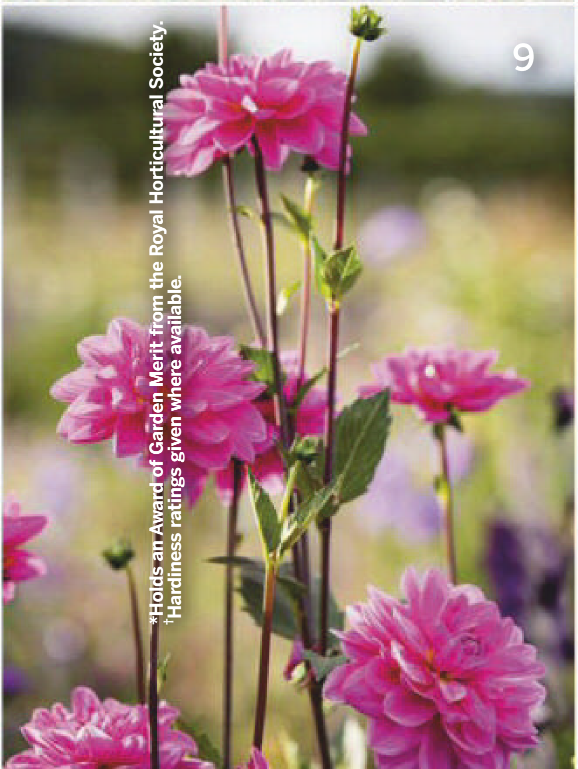
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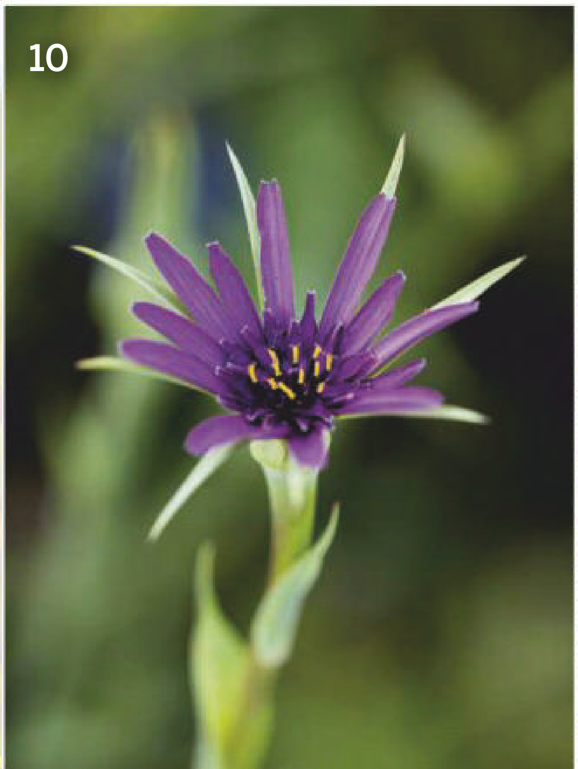
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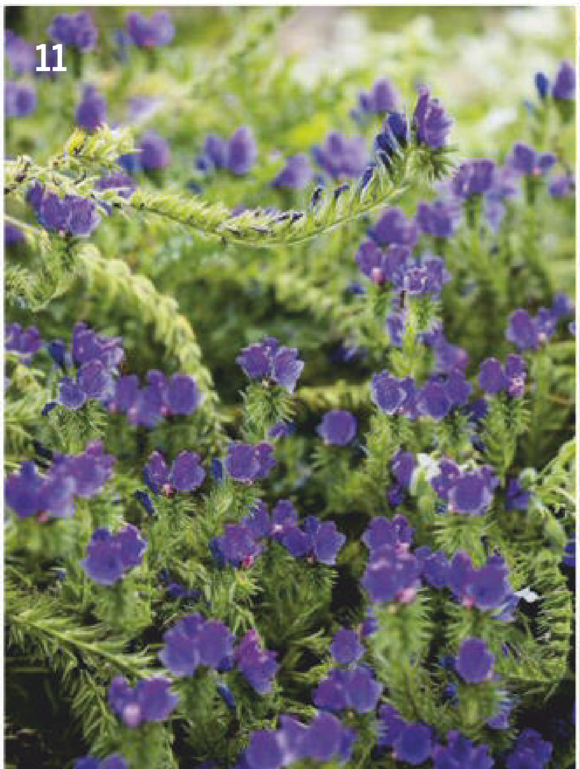
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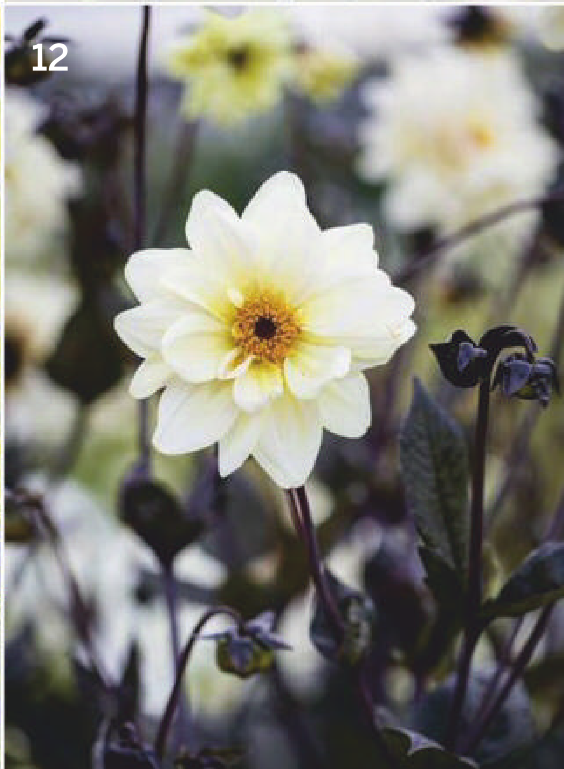
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[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

TOM COWARD

The head gardener at Gravetye Manor on his passion for fruit, the importance of classmates and having the best education in flower gardening you could ever imagine

WORDS **TIM RICHARDSON** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

One of the most respected head gardeners working in Britain today, Tom Coward cut his teeth as Fergus Garrett's deputy at Great Dixter in Sussex. For the past nine years he has headed the garden team at Gravetye Manor, once the home (now a hotel) of Victorian 'wild garden' exponent William Robinson. The garden is open only to paying guests, and Tom busies himself with creating pleasingly boisterous borders (*Crocosmia* 'Zeal Giant' in full effect on my visit) and developing a highly productive kitchen garden that is harvested daily for the head chef.

Tom draws me away from the post-lunch guests socialising by the lawn and up through the Azalea Bank towards the walled kitchen garden. It is here he seems most at home, plucking fruit from favoured trees and bushes for us to consume on the hoof. We start with apricot 'Flavourcot', a revelation for someone like me who is not an apricot fan (or so I thought). Then there are sticky mulberries from an ancient tree, peach 'Peregrine' from the glasshouse, which Tom says is the best cultivar of all, and ripe, red 'Discovery' apple from the orchard, which he candidly admits is below par at the end of July.

This kind of connoisseurial appreciation of produce is a traditional trait in head gardeners – but Tom has combined a thoroughly modern grounding as a gardener with an unconventional career.

> TOM HAS COMBINED A MODERN GROUNDING AS A GARDENER WITH AN UNCONVENTIONAL CAREER

It all started with fruit, his passion. And there is indeed something rather apple-like about Tom himself, with his rosy cheeks, round face, amiable disposition and a soft burr of an accent, thanks to an upbringing on the Isle of Wight. "My mum is a brilliant gardener and I helped her in the garden quite a lot," he says. "I vividly remember one occasion when I was a teenager. We were working in the garden when she just stopped and said, 'Oh, I wish I could do this as a job'. This 'ping!' went off in my head and I thought, 'Hey, that's a good idea, mum'."

Tom left school at 16 with the idea of going into commercial fruit production. He applied to RHS Wisley as a specialist fruit student, but was taken on to train in general horticulture. "That year blew my mind," he recalls. "I was a naive boy from the Isle of Wight." Tom says he is still in touch with his contemporaries – all of them professional gardeners. "You only realise later that it's your classmates who are the most important thing."

After four years' study at Pershore College and then three more at Kew Gardens (on its celebrated Diploma in Horticulture course), Tom finally got the idea of commercial fruit-growing out of his system. His first job was as assistant head gardener at a property owned by Sir Paul McCartney in Sussex. It was quite a learning curve. "I discovered a lot about working on your own and making the most of the situation. It was a big shock after Kew, where you've got 300 mates and you're all growing the best plants in the world; then suddenly there are just three of you."

After two years of this Tom went travelling, working in gardens in New Zealand and France to earn money as he went. It was during his travels, in 2007, that he got the call from Fergus Garrett at Dixter. "I was on the next boat," he says.

Tom had known both Fergus and the late Christopher Lloyd since his time at Wisley, but says that being at Dixter changed him as a gardener and as a person. "It was the best education in flower gardening that you could dream of. The intensity of Dixter is quite phenomenal – the number of people and plants. I learned about the importance of detail, and about plant selection – what it is you are looking for in a plant, the flowering season, the colour. It was already in there, but Fergus was able to formalise it." It was not just technical expertise that Tom took away from the experience: "It all made sense – a feeling that you're not just wasting your time with gardening. It was a validation of your craft."

Three years later, in 2010, the position at Gravetye came up. Oddly enough, Tom had already been offered the job before, six years earlier, by a previous owner. "I turned it down then and really regretted it," he recalls. "I knew the garden well from my time at Wisley. A friend of mine was head gardener there. We used to spend the weekends playing chess and drinking rum coffee. We'd walk around the garden and fantasise about what we would do if we had the budget."

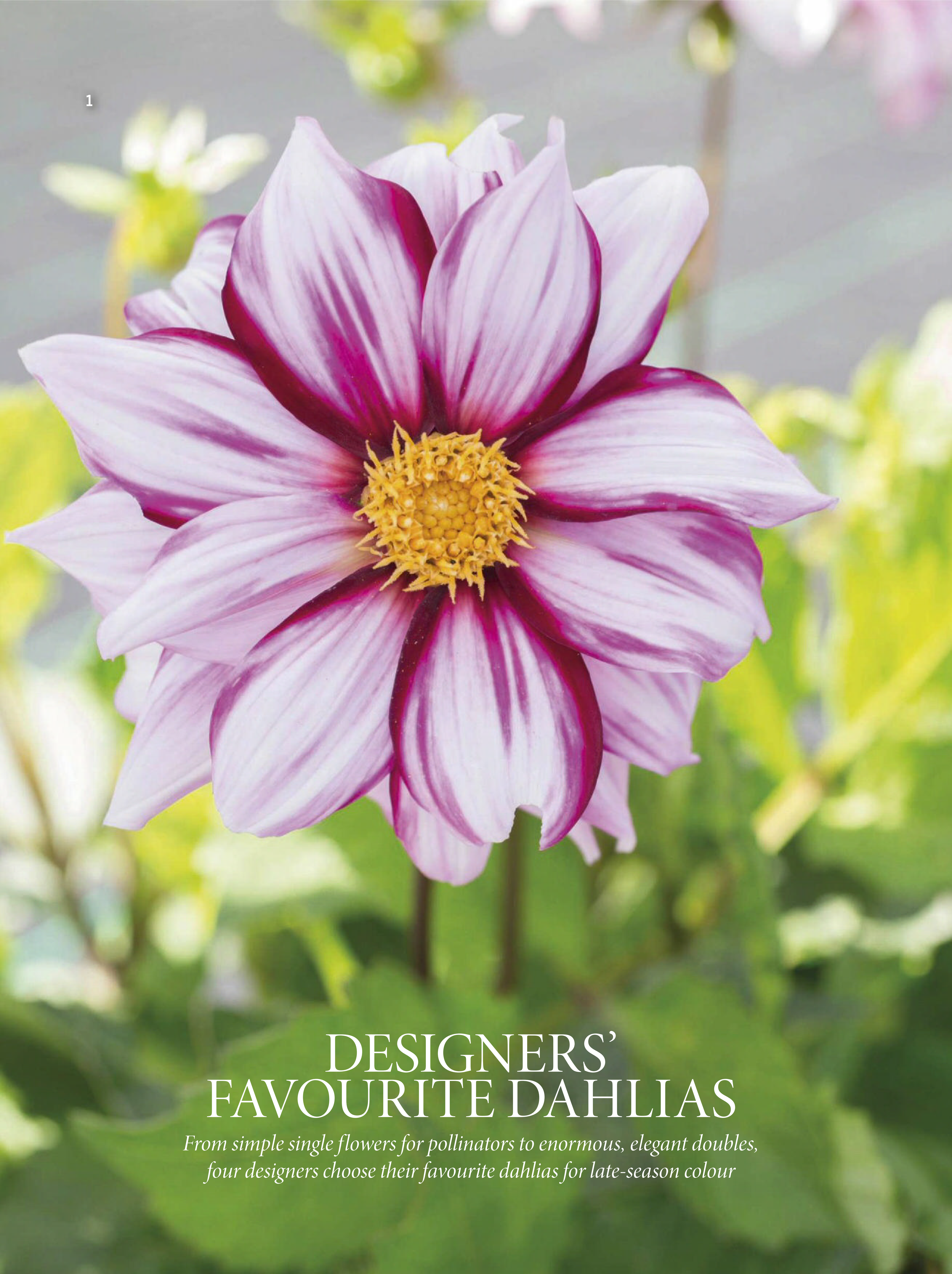
Now Tom is in a position to make the fantasy a reality. The five gardeners he appointed on arrival are still with him, nine years on, and he says that at the age of 40 he enjoys the challenge more than ever. "I love it here. Sometimes I dream about gardening in another climate or being given a lump of soil and the freedom to do what I want with it. But no, I'm quite content. Unlike some other head gardeners, I can just get on with the gardening." Which means, of course, that he can grow as much fruit as he wants to. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Gravetye Manor, Vowels Lane, West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4LJ.
Tel 01342 810567, **gravetyemanor.co.uk**

Tours of the garden tours are available, see website for details.

Garden



DESIGNERS' FAVOURITE DAHLIAS

From simple single flowers for pollinators to enormous, elegant doubles, four designers choose their favourite dahlias for late-season colour

ARABELLA LENNOX-BOYD

Internationally renowned designer with more than 40 years experience

1 *Dahlia* 'Edge of Joy'†
A decorative dahlia with delightfully pale-pink flowers with a dark burgundy frill radiating from the yellow stamens. Ideal for planting in containers, or I like to surround it with *Heuchera* 'Obsidian' at the front of a border. **Flowers (F)** July – September. **Height (H)** 90cm.

2 *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Auckland'
A most elegant, single-flowered dahlia, very prolific and adored by bees and butterflies. I plant it through *Anemanthele lessoniana*, *Agapanthus* 'Midnight Star' and *Caryopteris* x *clandonensis* 'Heavenly Blue' as if in a meadow. One of the best of the Bishop Series. **F** July – September. **H** 1m.

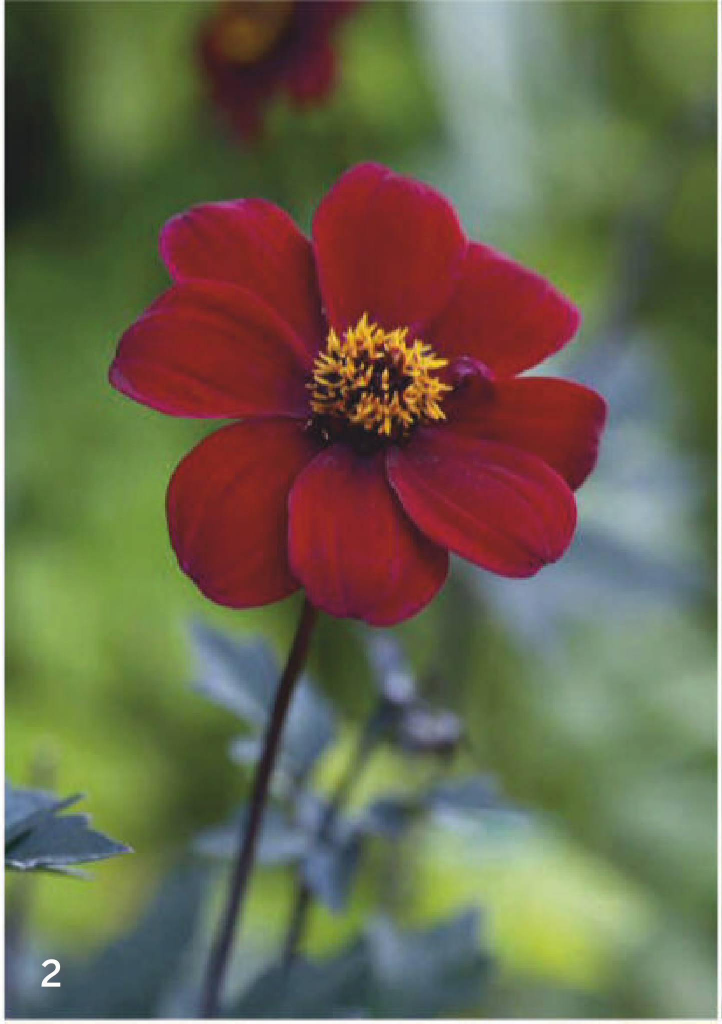
3 *Dahlia* 'Fairway Spur'
Bronze with a suffusion of pink, peach and mango, its petals are gently twisted and huge. Wonderful as a cut flower, it mixes well with cornflower blues and other coffee-coloured dahlias. **F** July – November. **H** 1m.

4 *Dahlia* 'Karma Maarten Zwaan'
A good choice for pots, the waterlily-type flowers are excellent cut flowers. In my garden they come through *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light', *Agapanthus* 'Silver Baby' and *Salvia chamaedryoides*. **F** July – September. **H** 80cm.

5 *Dahlia* 'Chat Noir'
A stunner with a deep, dark-burgundy almost black flowers. This large-flowering cactus dahlia is very impressive and mixes well with many other favourites. I usually plant with *Dahlia* 'Twyning's After Eight'. AGM*. **F** July – September. **H** 1.1m.

6 *Dahlia* 'Arabian Night'
Its large, double, velvety dark, burgundy blooms are perfect for mixing in a border. In my own it's surrounded by *Succisa pratensis*, *Deschampsia* and *Phlox paniculata* 'Düsterlohe'. The almost black heads add a rich texture to the border. **F** June – September. **H** 1.2m.

7 *Dahlia* 'Totally Tangerine'
A compact anemone-shaped dahlia with single outer orange petals that are flushed rose pink on the reverse, and which surround a fully double tangerine-orange centre. In my vegetable garden they look great with *Cynara cardunculus*. **F** July – September. **H** 80cm.



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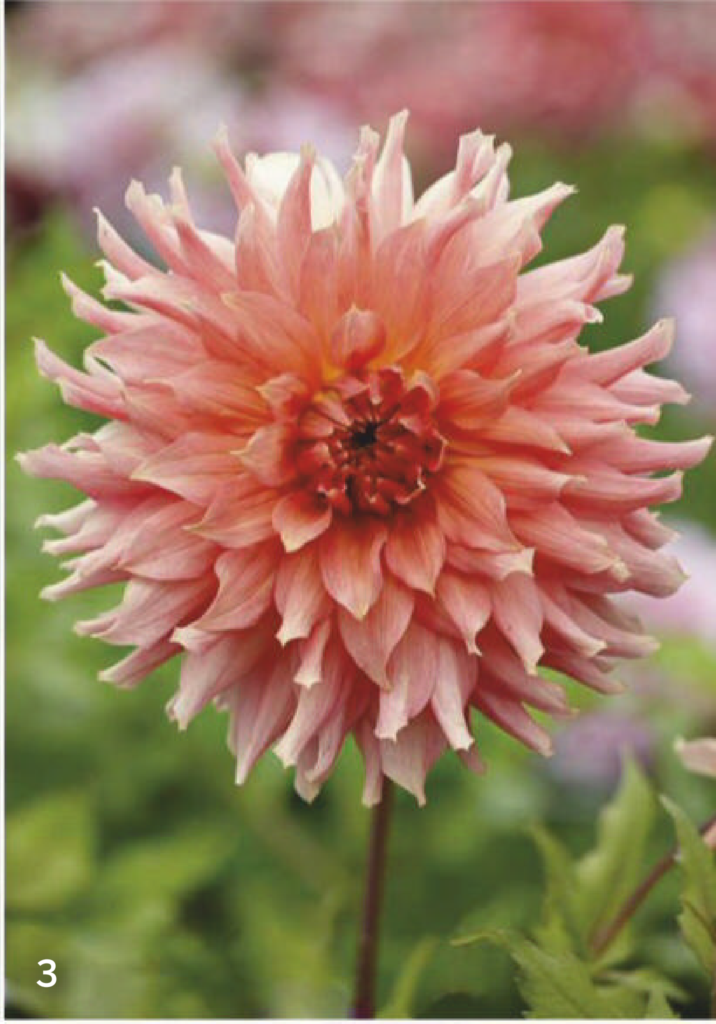

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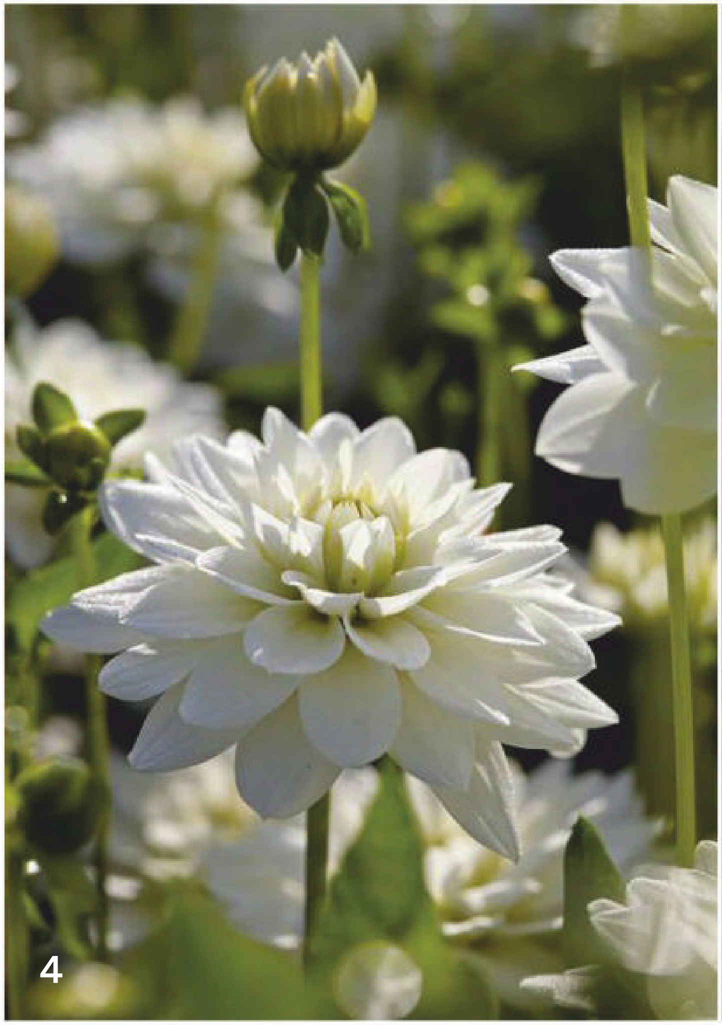

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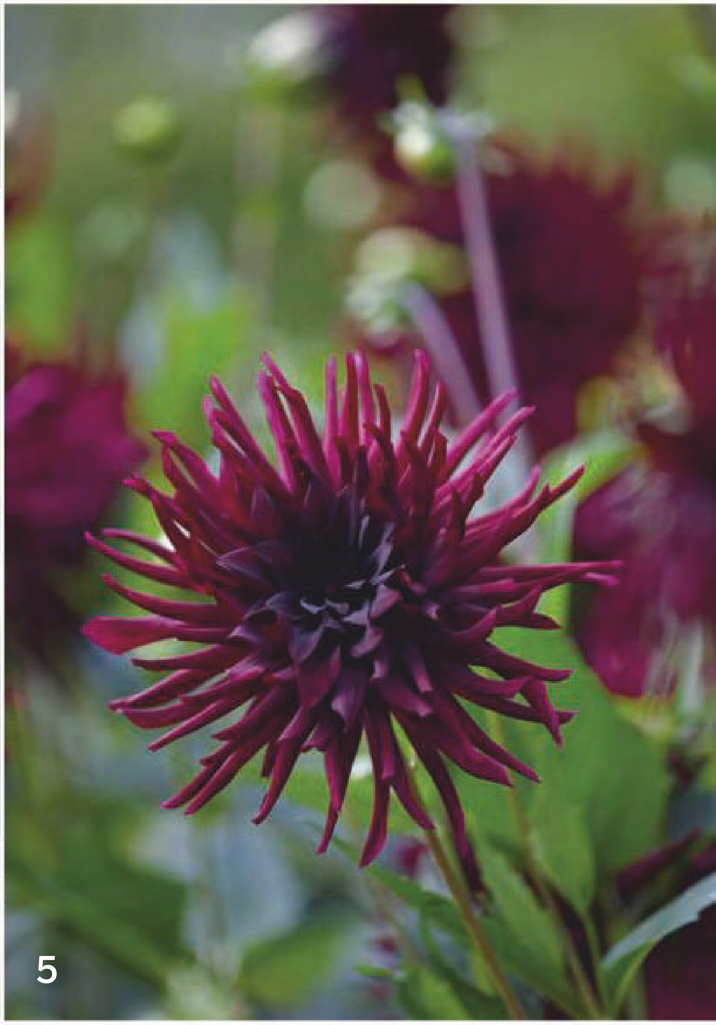

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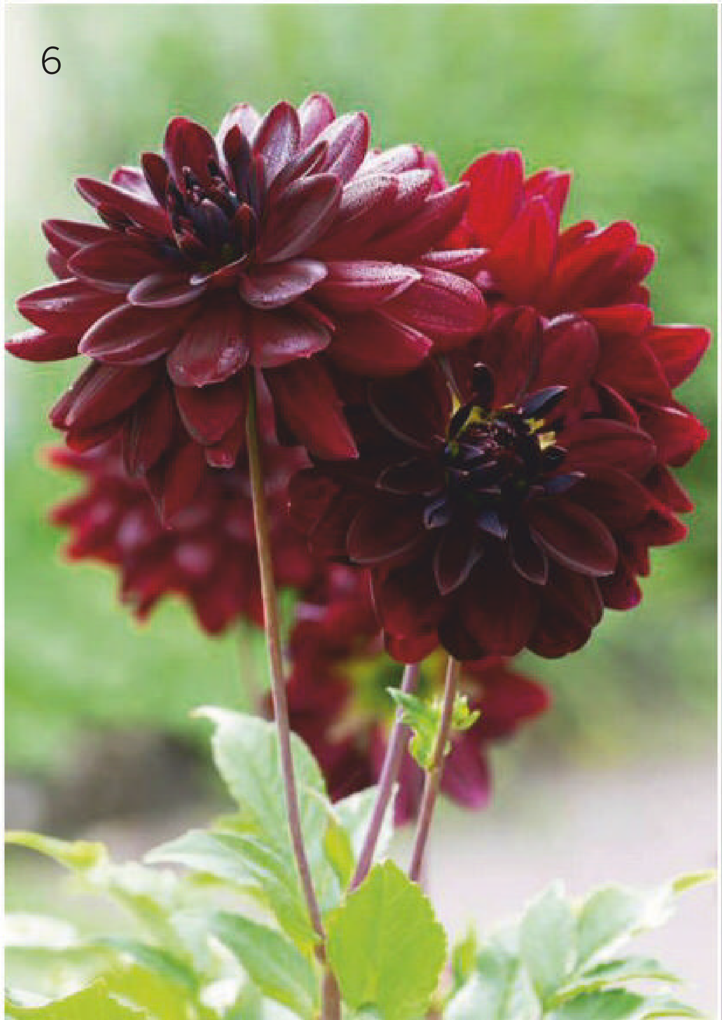

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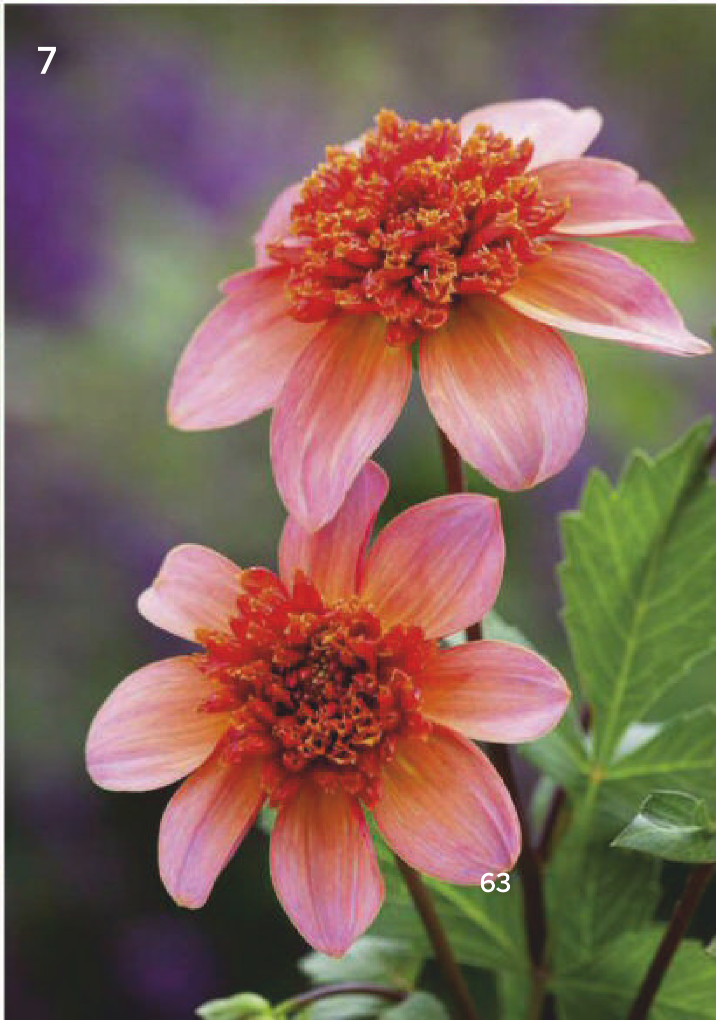

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1 GAP PHOTOS; 2 DORLING KINDERSLEY LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 3 GAP PHOTOS / VISIONS; 4 GAP PHOTOS / VISIONS; 5 PERNILLA BERGDAHL / GAP PHOTOS; 6 RACHEL WARNE; 7 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS.

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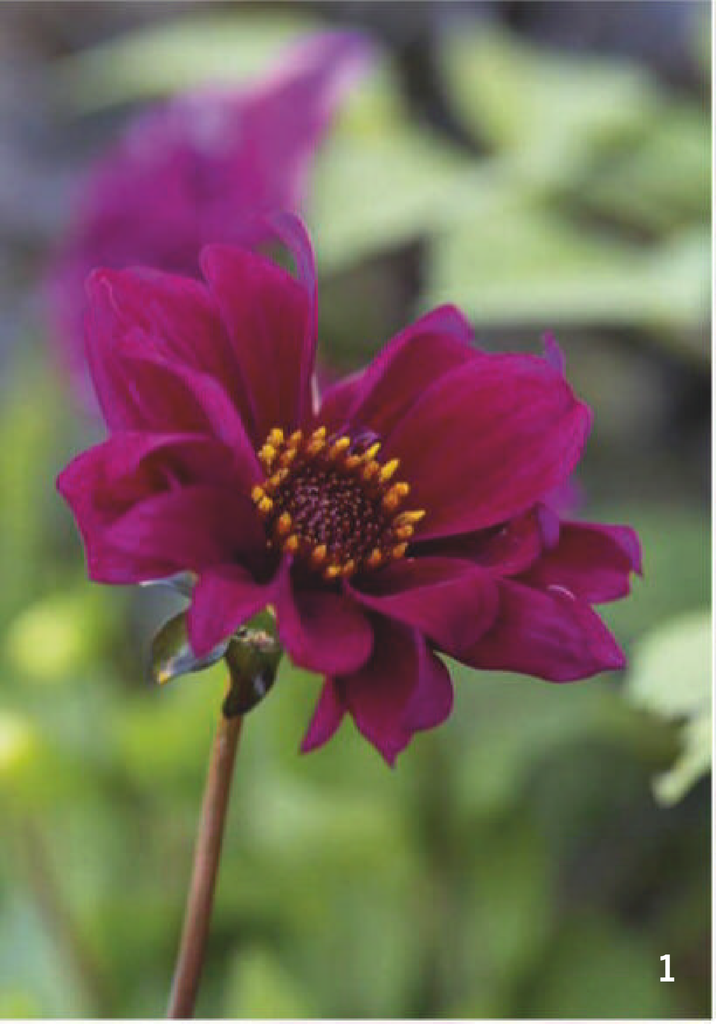
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Most dahlias have a hardiness rating of RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.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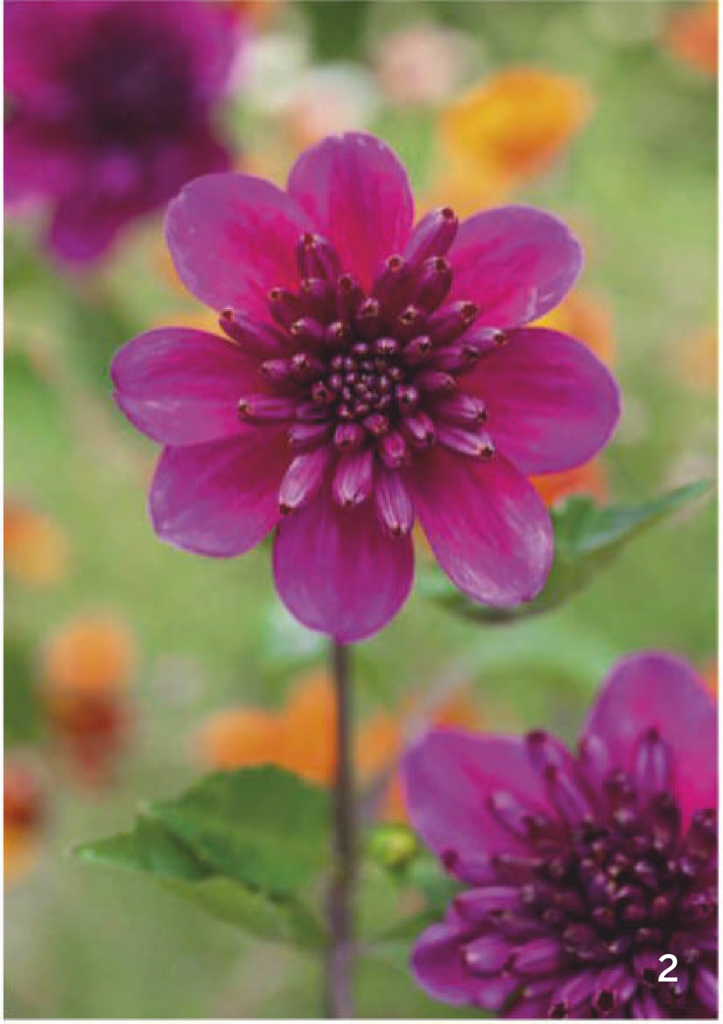
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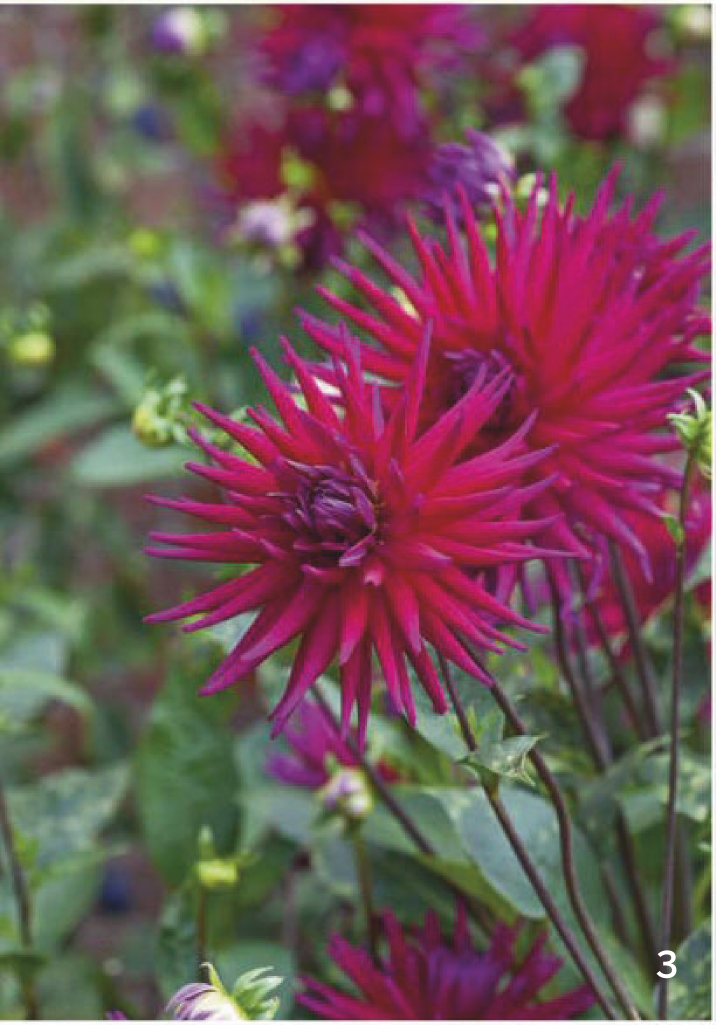
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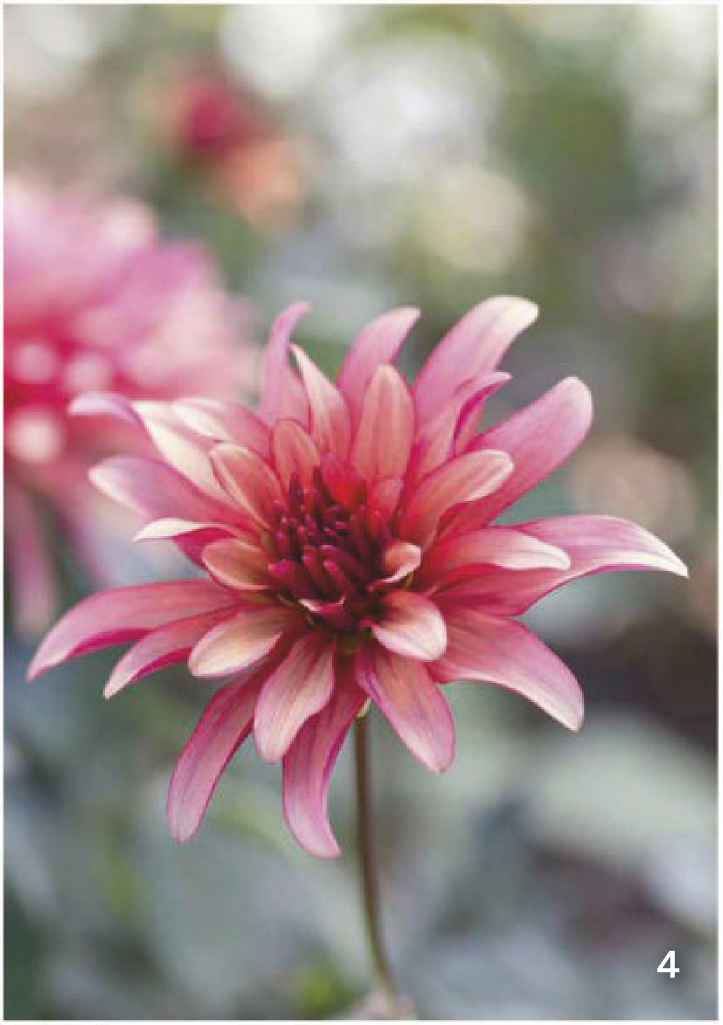
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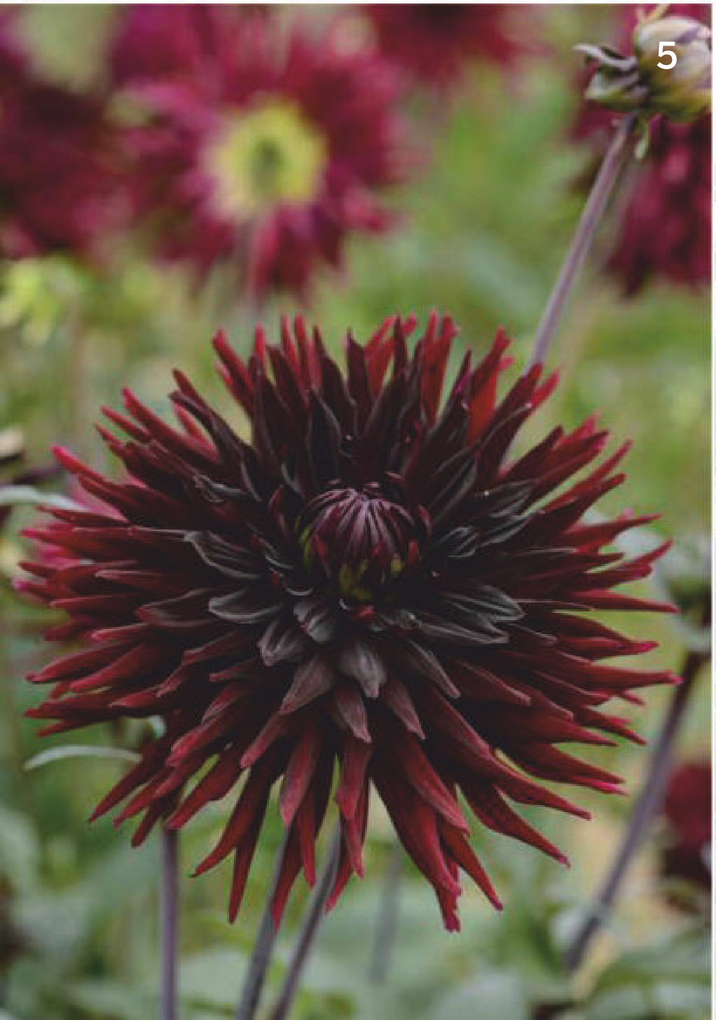
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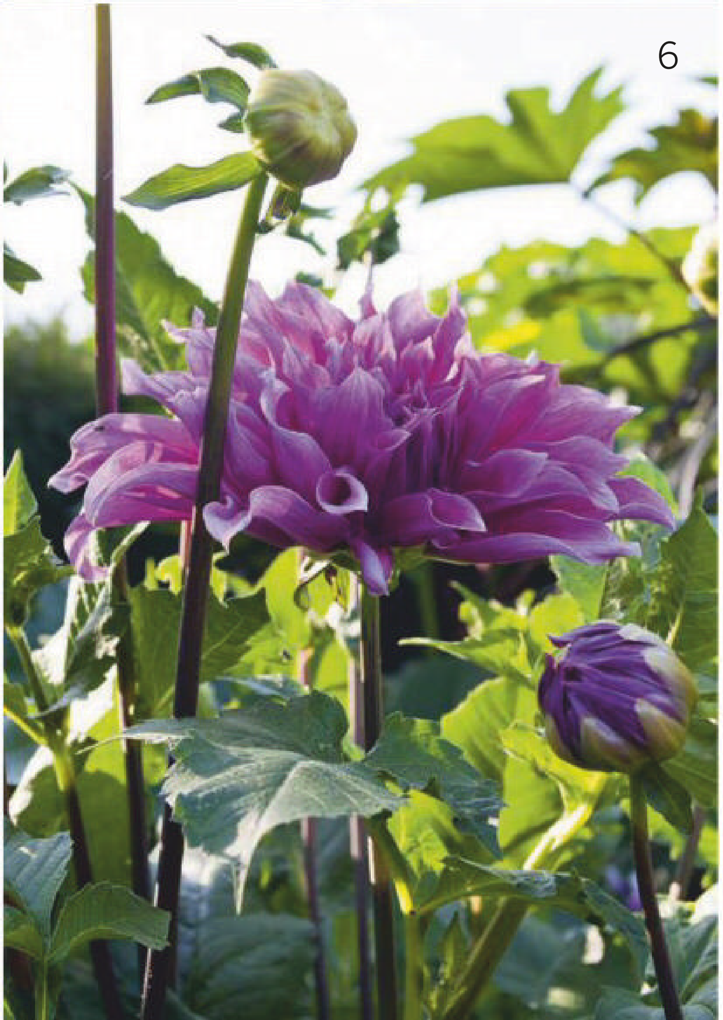
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JACK WALLINGTON

Garden designer and writer, who has trialled several dahlias

1 *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Canterbury'
Bright-magenta petals contrast beautifully with purple-black, finely cut foliage. The flowers are single – as are all in the Bishop Series – and are loved by bees and other pollinators. Excellent in pots and unlikely to need staking. **F** July – November. **H** 70cm.

2 *Dahlia* 'Purpinca'
Ideal for window boxes and small pots. This dwarf anemone dahlia has a ring of standard petals surrounding tightly clumped, tubular petals. A deep, red-plum colour that glows magenta backlit by sun. No staking. **F** July – November. **H** 30cm.

3 *Dahlia* 'Hillcrest Royal'
Loved by the late, great plantsman Christopher Lloyd of Great Dixter fame, this deep pink-magenta cactus dahlia has a blue glow. Flowers are a contemporary cut shape for those avoiding blousiness. Needs staking. **F** July – November. **H** 1.5m.

4 *Dahlia* 'Gallery Art Deco'
All the Gallery Series dahlias are excellent for pots and front of border but differ in shape and colour. This one has warm, tousled orange petals with red backs invoking the rich colours of Moroccan spice. No staking. AGM. **F** July – November. **H** 40cm.

5 *Dahlia* 'Black Jack'
The dahlia with perhaps the darkest black flowers, especially when they first open, eventually gaining a red tint. Dark foliage with stems coated in a dusty bloom. Good cut flower. Needs staking. **F** July – November. **H** 1.8m.

6 *Dahlia* 'Emory Paul'
For many this is the king of dahlias. Its giant, pink, dinner-plate flowers work well at the back of a borders thanks to their looser, ruffled petals. Stake higher to support the very heavy flowers. **F** July – November. **H** 1.8m.

1, 2 & 4 GAP PHOTOS; 3 JAN SMITH / GAP PHOTOS; 5 HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS; 6 SHARON PEARSON.

ULA MARIA

Garden designer,
landscape architect and
illustrator with a deep
connection to nature

1 *Dahlia* 'Bayou'
An anemone-flowering dahlia with lavender outer petals and feathered central petals in a darker magenta. With its buoyant and perky appearance it is bound to bring playfulness and fun into any garden. Flowers reach about 10cm across. This one comes up time and again as a favourite. **F** July – November **H** 90cm.

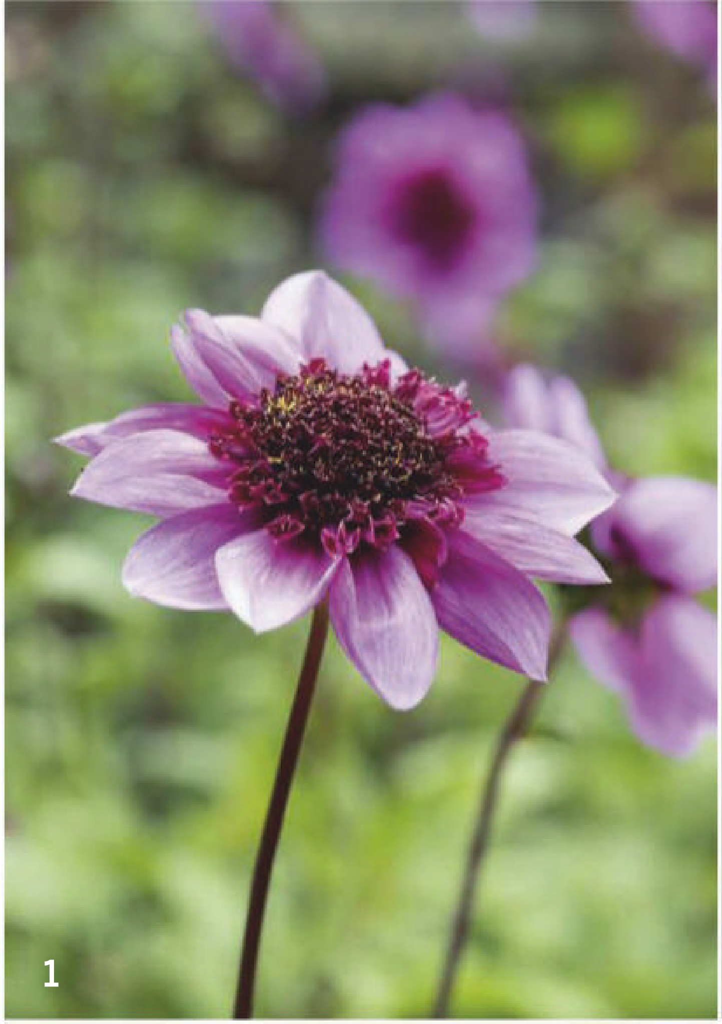
2 *Dahlia* 'Honka Fragile'
This distinctive star-shaped dahlia with radiating petals that roll inwards at their tips is really striking both in a border and a cut-flower display. The white flowers are delicately edged in pink-red. Never fails to draw attention. **F** July – November. **H** 80cm.

3 *Dahlia* 'Verrone's Obsidian'
Another star-shaped dahlia that has real impact and the one that made me fall in love with dahlias. The deepest of burgundies with a yellow central boss that draws in the bees – it's so elegant yet striking at the same time. Very versatile, it would make an excellent choice to enrich almost any planting scheme. **F** July – November. **H** 60cm.

4 *Dahlia* 'Labyrinth'
Large, blousy blooms that have real romantic appeal. The broad petals in varying shades of pink and peach twist and curl to give a fulsome head. Combine with other warm pastel-coloured flowers to create a radiant and exuberant display. **F** July – November. **H** 90cm.

5 *Dahlia* 'Platinum Blonde'
Described by some as looking like a double echinacea, this is an anemone type from the same family as 'Bayou' described above. Central feathered petals are in a rich creamy colour, while the outer petals are in white. May need staking. **F** July – November. **H** 90cm.

6 *Dahlia* 'Waltzing Mathilda'
A semi-double dahlia with ever so slightly twisting petals that lend it a more relaxed appeal. Flowers are a wash of orangey coral pink, set off against dark purple brown stems and foliage. I love it nestled among large clumps of airy ornamental grasses. AGM. **F** July – November. **H** 70cm.



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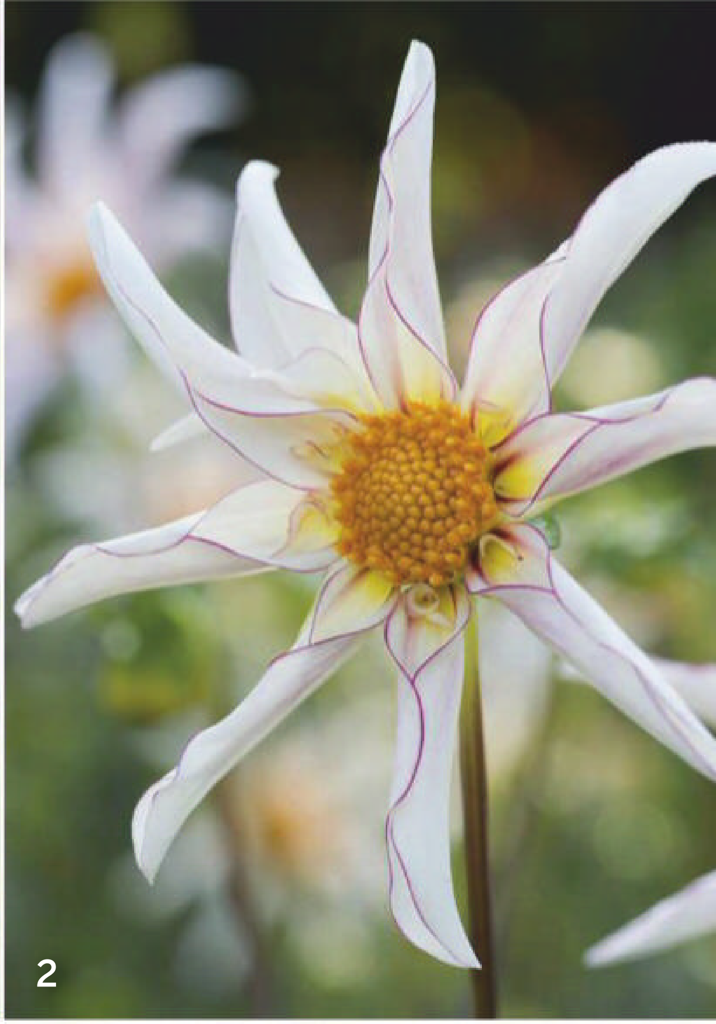

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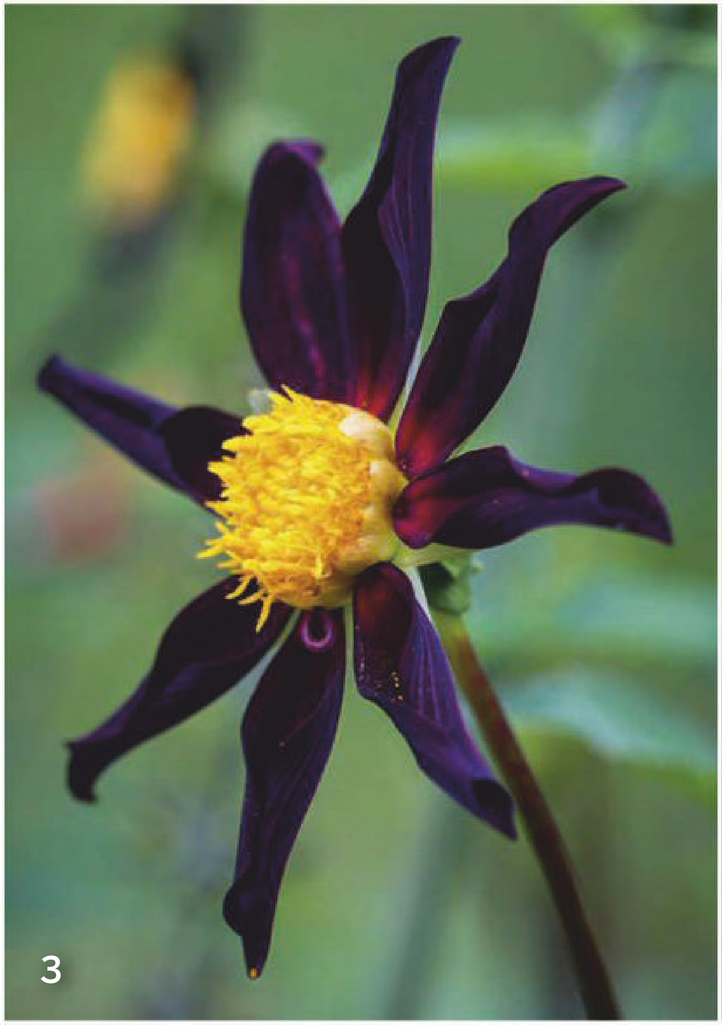

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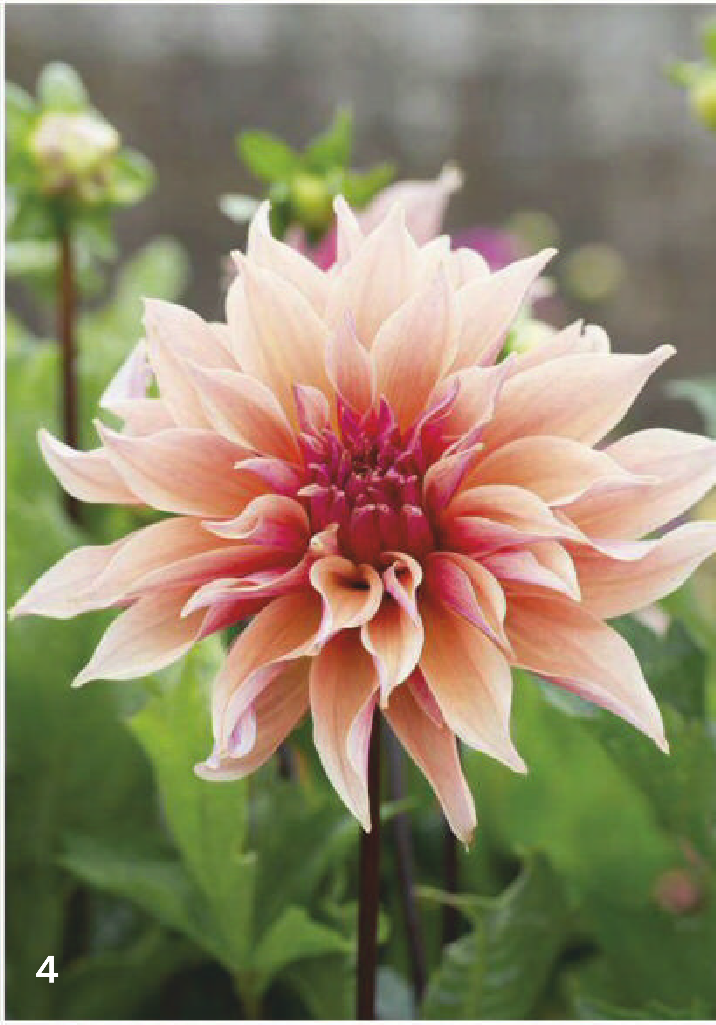

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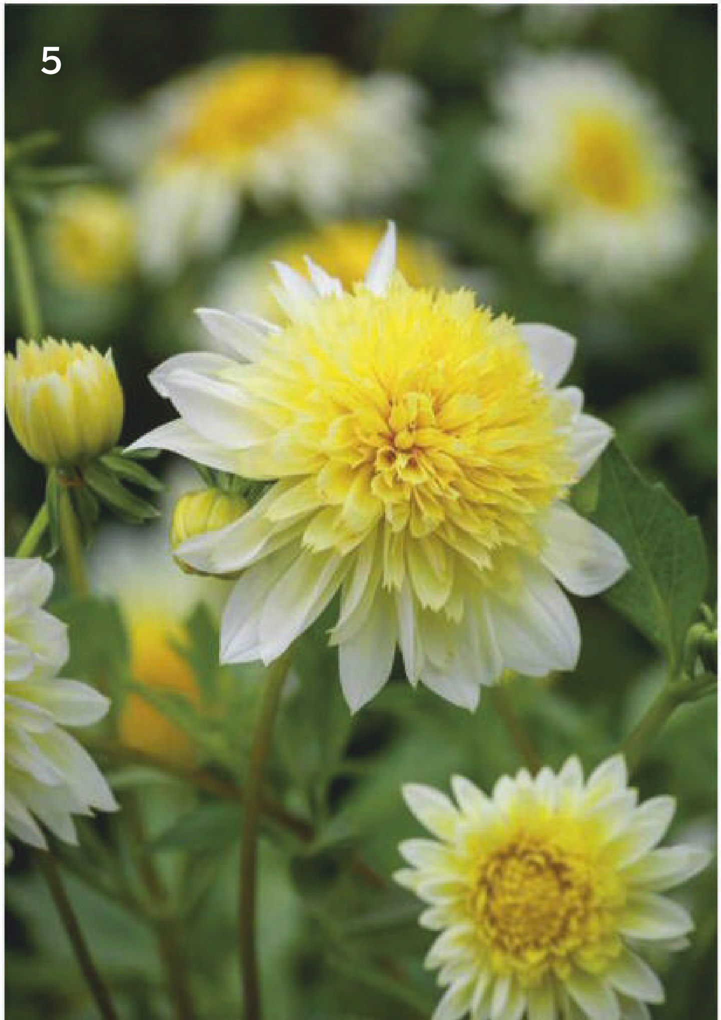

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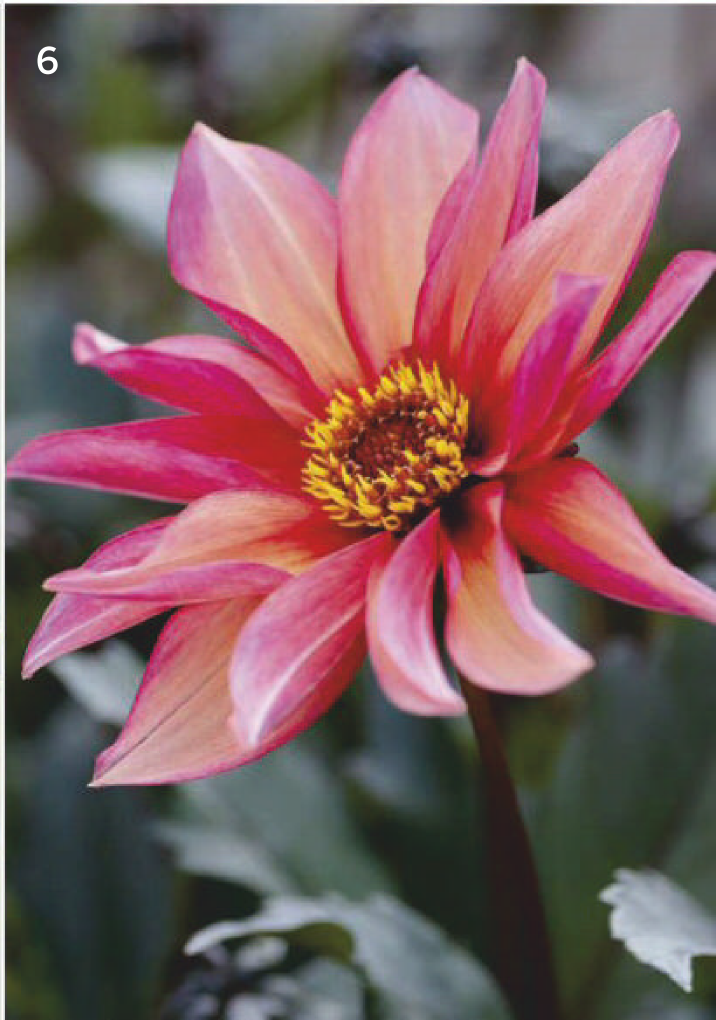

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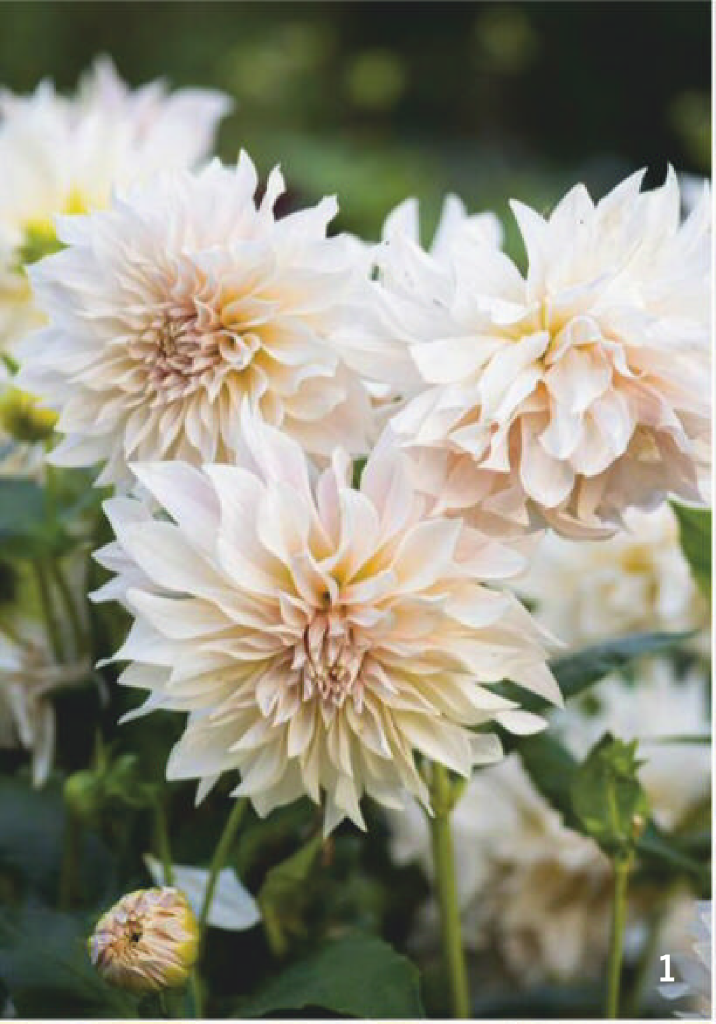
1 NICOLA STOCKEN / GAP PHOTOS; 2 TIM GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 3 ANN E GREEN-ARMYTAGE / GAP PHOTOS;
4 SONIA HUNT / GAP PHOTOS; 5 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS; 6 JOHN MARTIN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.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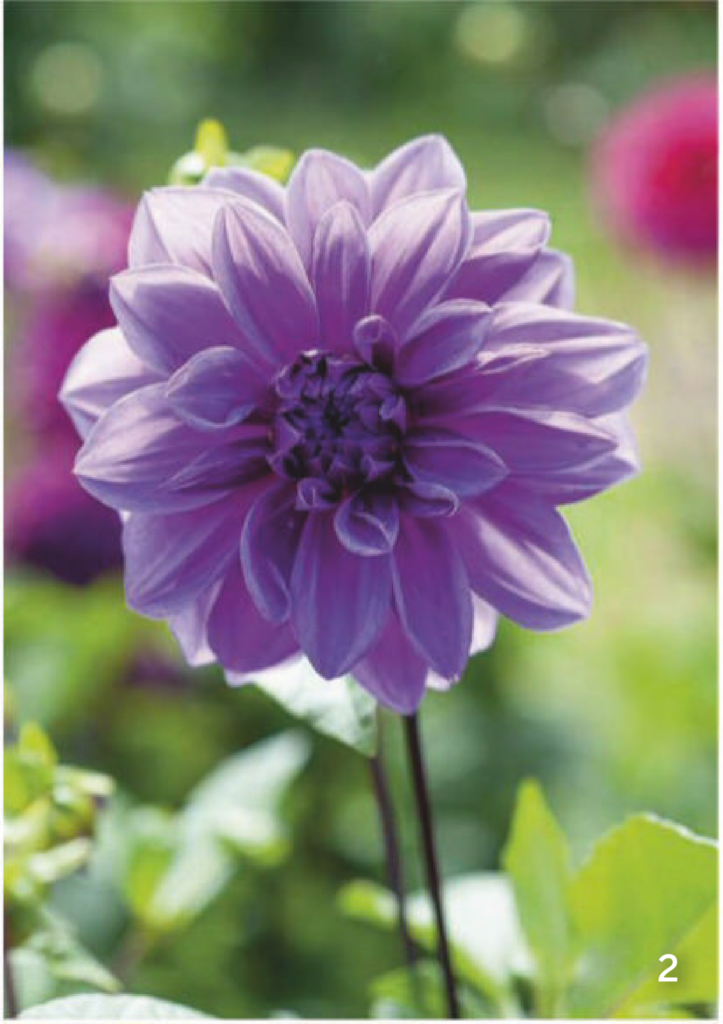
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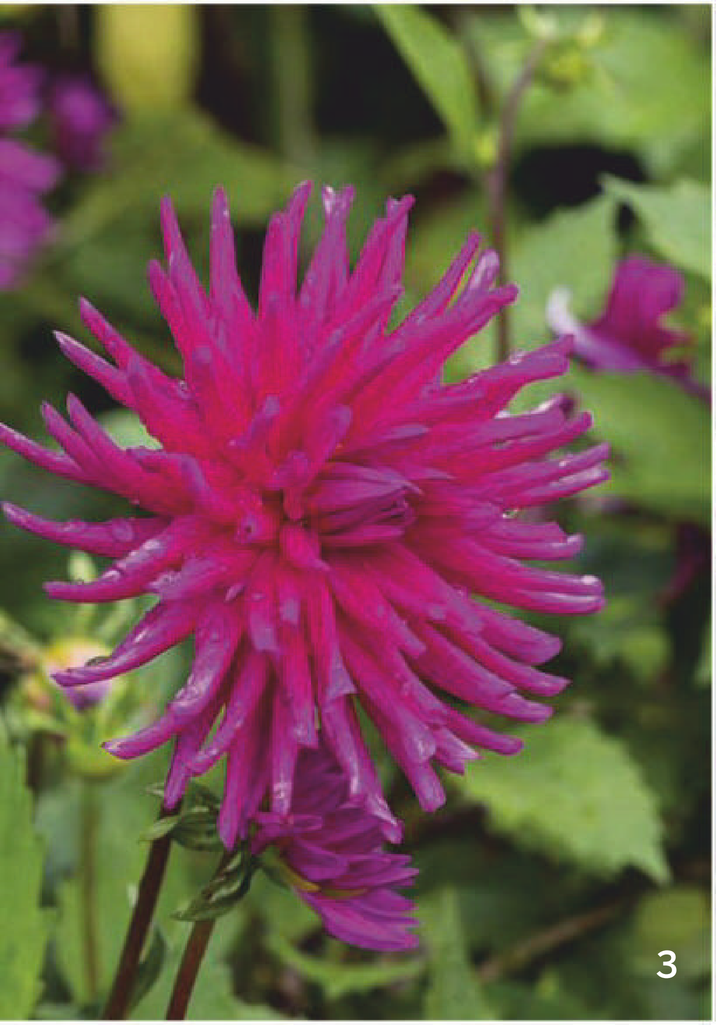
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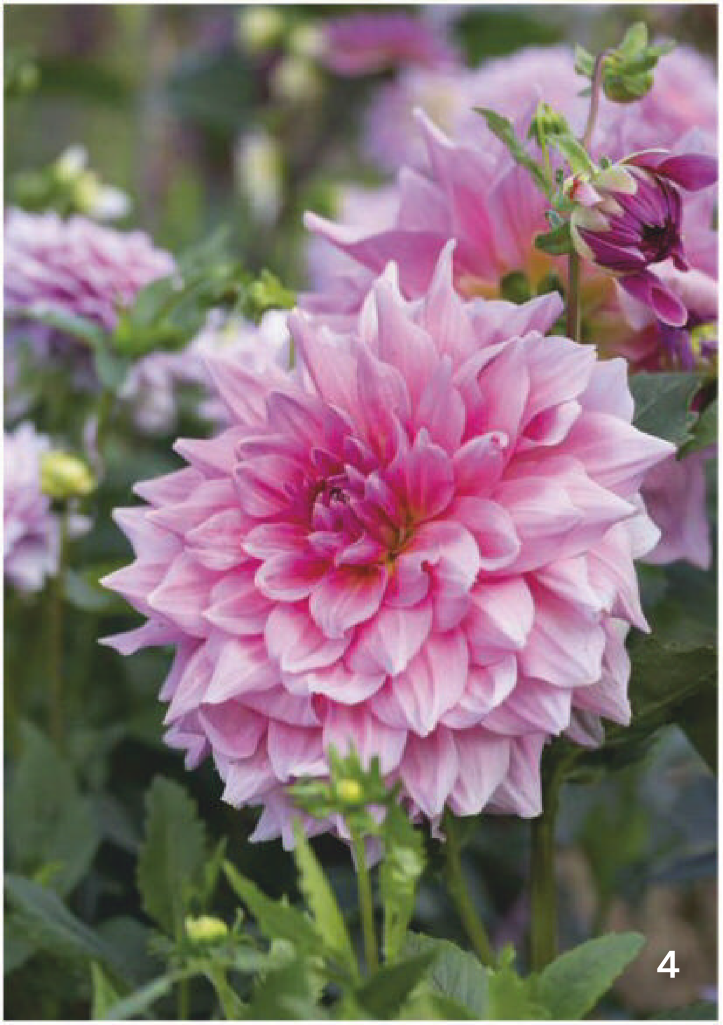
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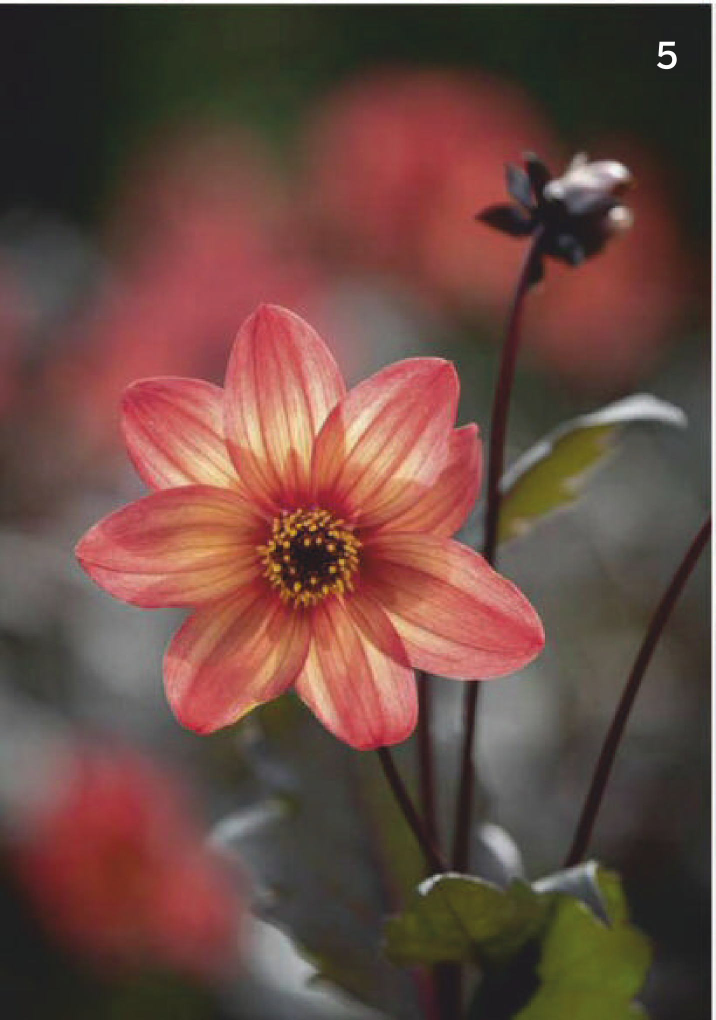
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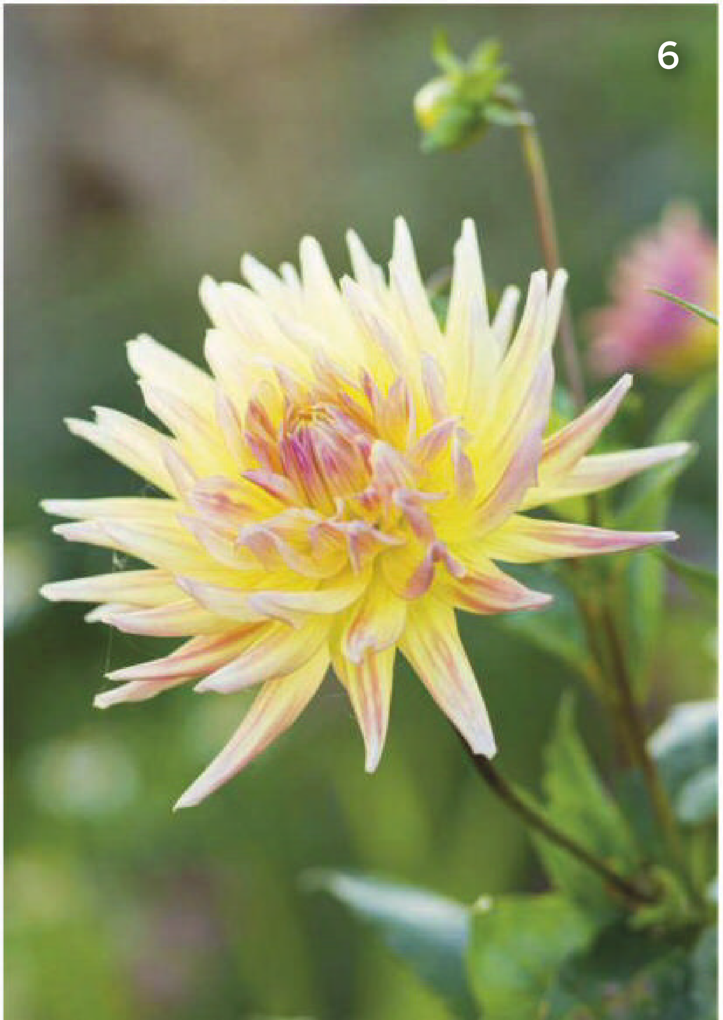
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JO THOMPSON

Award-winning garden designer, and plantswoman with a love of romantic planting

1 *Dahlia* 'Café au Lait'
The dahlia to top all dahlias: eye-wateringly cool and exquisitely pretty at the same time. An unfurling of petals in elegant shades of cream, beige and the gentlest of dusky pink, forms a bloom so big I'm tempted to wear it as a hat. **F** July – November. **H** 1m.

2 *Dahlia* 'Lilac Time'
A magnificent yet neat dinner-plate dahlia in shades of pinkish-lilac-blue. It is quite restrained and exudes self-control – I like to grow it with unruly *Gaura* to create a yin and yang contrast that relaxes the whole feel. **F** June – October. **H** 1.1m.

3 *Dahlia* 'Purple Gem'
A regal dahlia, cactus in form and looking at home in many colour combinations in the border. Hints of deep lilac-blue at the centre of the flowers, becoming lighter along the petals, make this a very useful cultivar both in the border and in a vase. **F** July – September. **H** 1m.

4 *Dahlia* 'Otto's Thrill'
A dinner-plate dahlia with petals in the most perfect muted pink, heading towards tones of squashed strawberry. Flowers are real show stoppers. AGM. **F** July – September. **H** 1m.

5 *Dahlia* 'Schipper's Bronze'
I am a great fan of shades of burnished bronze and coral in the autumn garden, and this dahlia with its single flowers on the end of lovely dark stems sits as perfectly among hotter colours, such as red and orange, as it does among a very current clash of pink. **F** July – November. **H** 75cm.

6 *Dahlia* 'Banana Cabana'
A dahlia that is unashamedly fabulous. Pale lemon, apricot and pink really do all work together as they blend into each other along the tubular petals of this cactus dahlia. **F** June – October. **H** 1.3m.

7 *Dahlia merckii*
So restrained, so elegant – single flowers of palest mother-of -pearl pink with muted yellow centres. The flowers sit high atop the tall stems and nod gently, a very lovely punctuation in the border. Unlike most dahlias, it is fairly hardy in the UK. **F** July – September. **H** 1.5m.

1 JOANNA KOSSAK / GAP PHOTOS; 2 PETER D ANDERSON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 3 GKSFLORAP CS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 4 GAP PHOTOS; 5 JONATHAN BUCKLEY; 6 RACHEL WARNE / GAP PHOTOS, JO THOMPSON DESIGN, THE BELL INN PUB; 7 JASON INGRAM.

WHERE TO BUY

Recommended dahlia suppliers

Halls of Heddon
West Heddon Nursery,
Heddon on the Wall,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 0JS.
Tel 01661 852445,
hallsofheddon.com

J Parkers
16 Hadfield Street, Stretford,
Manchester M16 9FG.
Tel 0161 848 1100, jparkers.co.uk

National Dahlia Collection
Varfell Lane, Longrock,
Penzance, Cornwall TR20 8AQ.
Tel 07525 867976,
nationaldahliacollection.co.uk

Peter Nyssen
124 Flixton Road, Urmston,
Manchester M41 5BG.
Tel 0161 747 4000, peternyssen.com

Sarah Raven
1 Woodstock Court, Blenheim Road,
Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4AN.
Tel 0345 092 0283, sarahraven.com

tape
labels & stamp
wire
bags & stickers
wired twine
stub wires
Tubes
bags

Beautiful process

From their small studio in southeast London, Melissa Richardson and Amy Ireland create pressed flowers that are not only beautiful works of art, but a wonderful way of preserving a favourite plant, a bouquet or even an entire garden

WORDS NATASHA GOODFELLOW PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Flower Press
Handmade in London

This page, from left to right
Alongside pressed flowers, JamJar Edit offers a range of desirable products, including the flower paperweights seen opposite and this handmade oak veneer flower press.

A recently pressed cosmos awaits mounting. With their delicate foliage and colourful flowers, cosmos make particularly strong candidates for pressing.

JamJar founder Melissa picks blooms for pressing. Delicate flowers, such as fennel, cosmos, poppies, geums and everlasting sweet peas, "which press like a dream", are ideal.

Facing page
Pressed flower panels sit alongside fresh cut flowers in Melissa and Amy's studio. The old cigar press on the left, filled with test tubes, is one of their favourite ways to display flowers.

Melissa Richardson picks up a fallen cosmos bud in her south London garden, and pops it into a vase to prolong its life. Her love of flowers and their preservation is what led her, after 27 years of running a model agency, to start JamJar Flowers in 2009. "People were always sending flowers for the models and, since we didn't have enough vases, they'd all sit about dying," says Melissa. "That depressed me." Her idea – to deliver seasonal bouquets in vases or jam jars ('because that's what we put our pickings in when we were kids") – caught on and business flourished until, in 2014, a commission from Mulberry for a show invitation using pressed flowers sparked a new direction.

"We said yes immediately, even though neither of us had ever pressed flowers professionally before," says Amy Ireland who had by then joined Melissa. Two frantic weeks followed as they researched the process and began pressing. "We learnt the hard way," says Amy. "We'd been using ammi, which was pressing beautifully and then all of a sudden, supplies dried up and we had to try dill instead, which was a disaster." Luckily, more ammi was found, Mulberry was happy – and Melissa and Amy were hooked.

When, in 2017, they were asked to produce an installation for a three-month long exhibition, pressed flowers were the obvious choice. "We're such a small team and couldn't have gone in and topped up fresh flowers every day," says Amy. "We wanted to do something that would last." They produced a roll of wallpaper using pressed flowers and a bespoke panel of mounted, framed pressings. It generated both huge amounts of interest and is one of Melissa and Amy's all-time favourite commissions: a request to create another bespoke panel – a floral record of the land and

Turn to page 72 to continue ▷

Pressing flowers is always a surprise – you never know what's going to work

This image Once mounted, the pressed flowers are sent to calligrapher Lu Guthrie who labels them with their name. They are then returned for framing in-house.

Facing page Working at the garden table, Melissa and Amy sort through the flowers, making up bunches for vases and selecting others for pressing.

This page, from left

Amy places a cosmos in the press, carefully positioning it between two pieces of blotting paper. Leaving space around the flower helps the paper to draw out moisture.

After pressing, the flowers are sorted and the best examples are secured with a little tape, wrapped in tissue paper and stored in a plan chest to form an archive for future projects.

JamJar receive requests to press bouquets from special occasions or simply from garden pickings, such as this selection from Melissa's own garden in south London.

Facing page

Flowers for pressing should be as fresh as possible and dry (not dewy). They should be left inside the press for four to six weeks until the paper and the flowers are perfectly dry.

▷ woodland around an extraordinary house on Dartmoor. "That was the first time we'd taken the presses to site," says Melissa."We pressed straight out of the ground, picking wild strawberry plants and ferns the owner took us to." Others have been similarly inspired, asking for pressings of blooms they had in their wedding bouquets or for portraits of favourite plants. "It's such a lovely idea to preserve the look and feel of a garden," says Amy.

The pair now take their presses with them wherever they go, building up an archive of blooms for their work. Picked, dry blooms are placed in the press, sandwiched between blotting paper to draw out their moisture. "You can manipulate the flowers to get the shape you want," says Amy, nudging a sweet pea flowerhead to accentuate the natural curl of the stem and pinching off an obfuscating tendril. Flowers positioned, a layer of non-absorbent card is placed on top and the process repeated until the press is full. Then it is screwed tight, dated, and left for four to six weeks (checking after two weeks and then every week or so) until the paper and the flowers are perfectly dry.

"The more delicate the flower, the better," says Melissa. Roses, peonies, daffodils are best avoided, as are white flowers, which are the first to turn brown. Once pressed, the flowers are then mounted on card using tweezers to carefully peel away the paper and a little glue applied to the sturdier elements – the stem, leaves and buds. Opening the presses is the most exciting part of the process. "It's always a surprise," says Melissa, unveiling her latest pressing. "You never know what's going to work. Look at this poppy. The petals shouldn't really be folded like that but look at it." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about JamJar's pressed flowers at jamjaredit.co.uk

IN BRIEF

What Ultra-naturalistic 'non-garden'.
Where Portola Valley, California, USA.
Climate Long, arid summers; short, cold and wet winters.
Soil Gravelly and dry.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

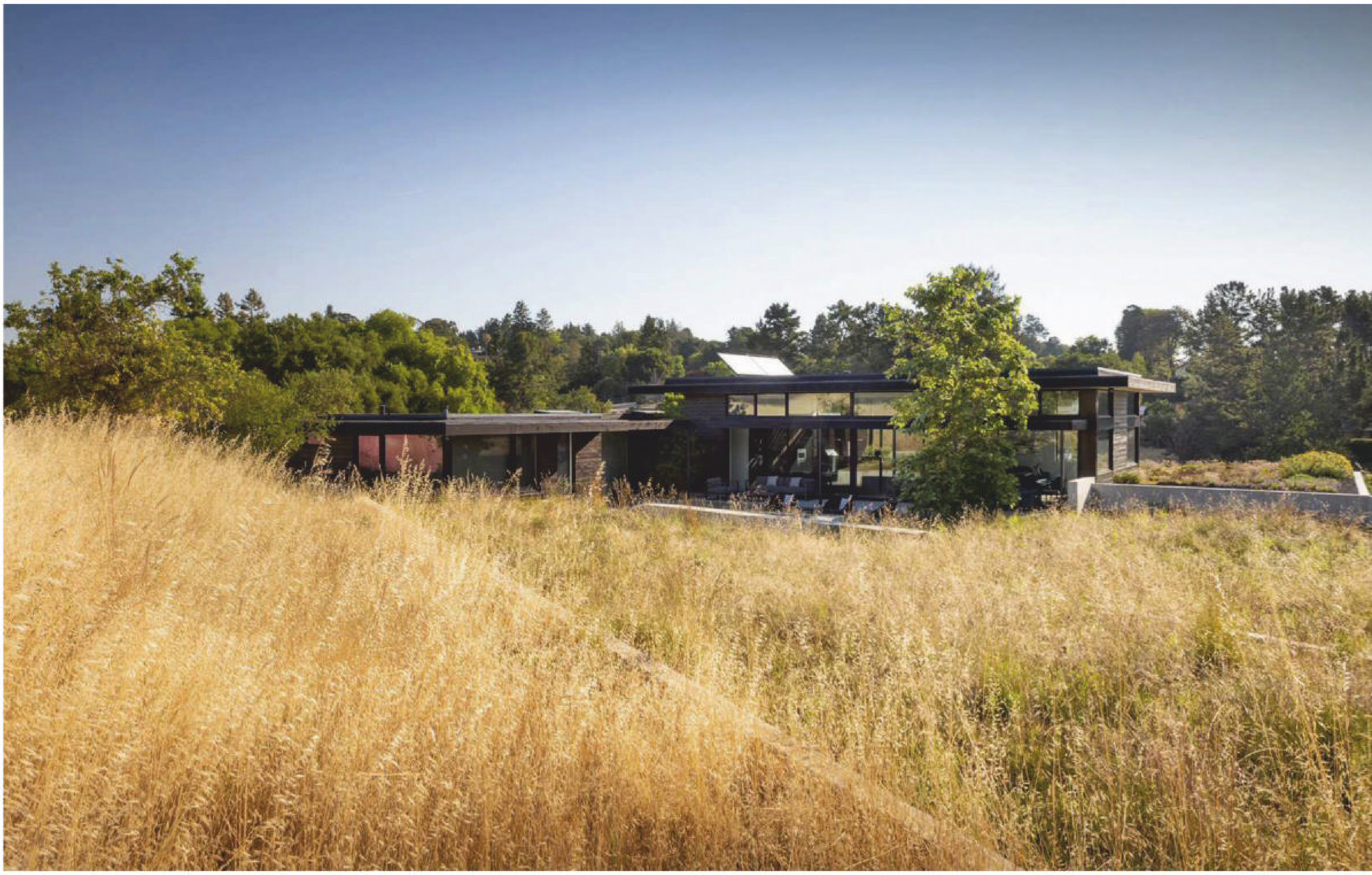
Below The glass-walled house in Portola Valley, California, is set in grassland, with the garden subtly delimited by fin-like concrete walls, partially obscured by vegetation.

Right Concrete steps lead down to a guest house that echoes the house's 'barn-like' architectural aesthetic.

Without limits

A carefully understated garden designed by Ron Lutsko in California's Portola Valley takes its cues from the gently rolling landscape and non-native grasses of the region's 19th-century pasture-land heritage

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM



Gardens have been becoming less 'garden-like' in recent years – at least at the cutting edge of design. What this means in practice is the blurring of the boundaries between garden and landscape, and the use of a palette of plants with a 'naturalistic' look and feel, even if in many cases the subjects used are not native to the region.

This trend is generally expressed in terms of plant choice – the idea of 'plant communities' – but it is also possible to develop it in the context of the wider landscape. At one extreme, this involves embedding the property in its locale so that at first sight it does not seem to have a garden at all.

This is what San Francisco-based designer Ron Lutsko has achieved at a property in a well-heeled enclave about 30 miles southeast of the city. It may seem like an extreme strategy now, but his approach is likely to become ever more commonplace as private owners seek to avoid the connotations of domesticity.

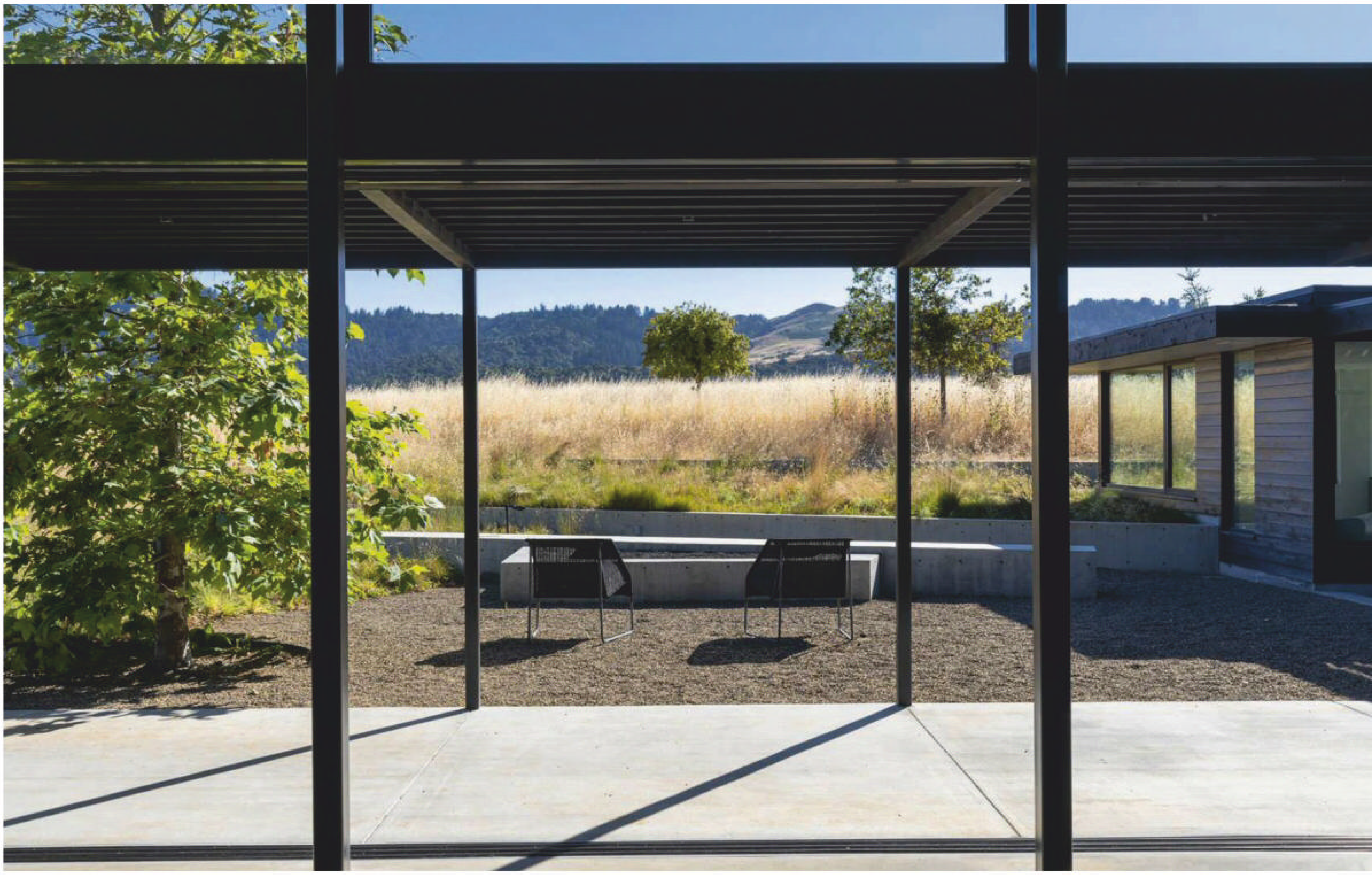
Portola Valley is a rural area distinguished by gently undulating fields and small copses of native woodland. Its pleasantly understated, semi-agricultural atmosphere belies the fact that this is one of the wealthiest communities in the USA – a lower-key alternative to neighbouring Palo Alto for the tech-industry executives of Silicon Valley.

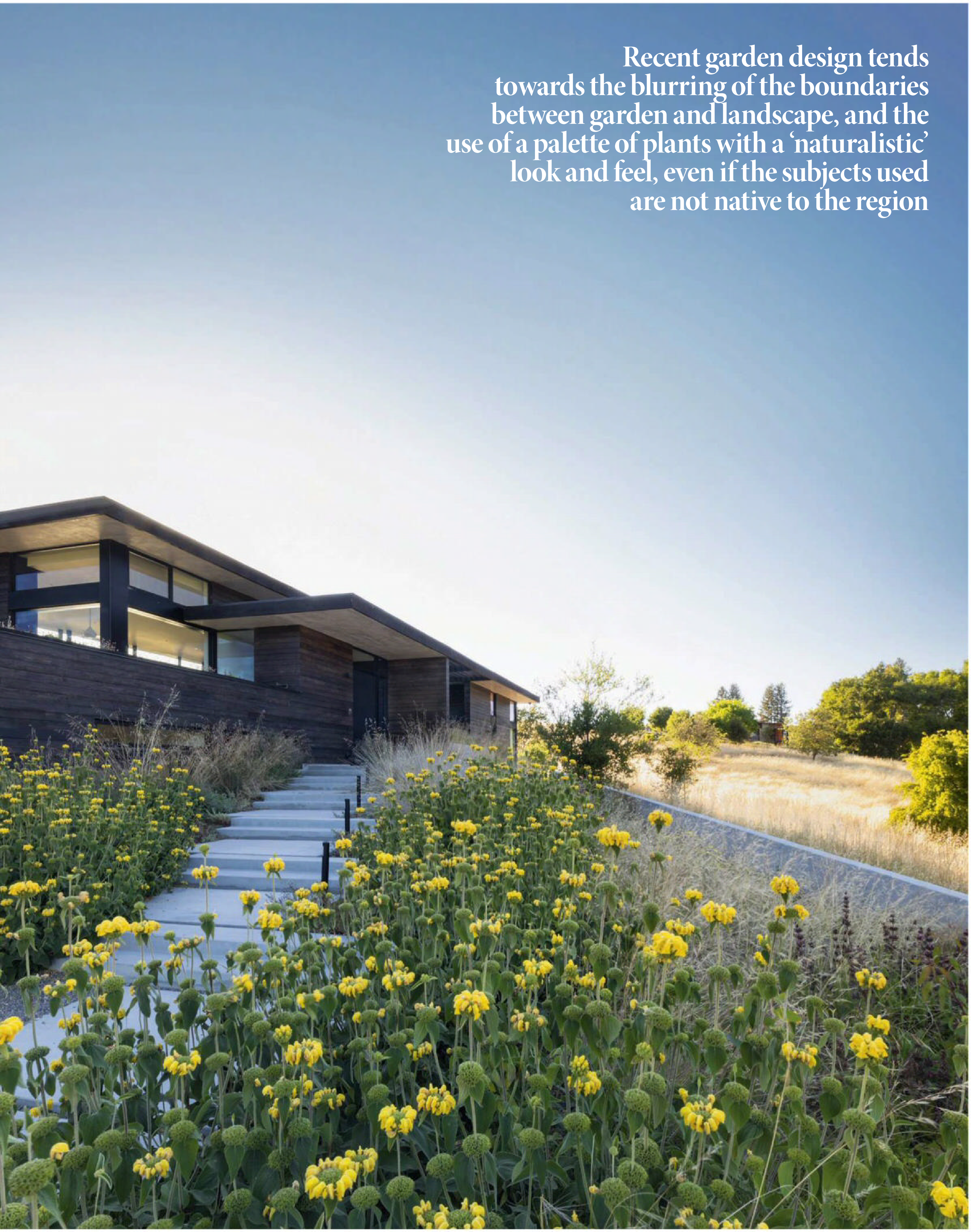
A new modernist house designed by architect Jonathan Feldman reflects this understated aesthetic, in that it is a single-storey residence of dark-stained, cedar boards and plate glass, hunkered down on the side of a small hill. Ron was commissioned to create a setting for the house that did not interrupt the link with the landscape.

"The big question at a site like this is, 'Where are the edges?'," Ron begins. "We thought we would draw really clear lines around the garden areas and let the rest do its thing." Those 'clear lines' have been created by a series of low, concrete walls or fins in the hillside by the house that are effectively absorbed into the topography. "We made a series of slices through the hillside," Ron explains. "Down by the ▷

Below The terrace and garden area at the property is defined by low, concrete walls, creating as little interruption as possible with the wider landscape. A native Californian plane (*Platanus racemosa*) stands on the left.

Right *Phlomis* 'Edward Bowles' dominates the route up to the main house. The simplicity of the planting chimes with the grassland beyond the low perimeter wall.





Recent garden design tends towards the blurring of the boundaries between garden and landscape, and the use of a palette of plants with a 'naturalistic' look and feel, even if the subjects used are not native to the region

There is an irony to the apparently natural, timeless scene that is in fact defined by 'invasive' plants – grasses that glow with a richly burnished hue in mid-May, turning golden-yellow in the July sunshine and grey in November

▷ house the walls contain you and create the garden space. But we also wanted them to seem like a gesture that takes you off into the landscape. They are almost like little ridges on the hillside – they lead you out."

Beyond the walls, Ron has purposely left the hillside itself alone. "There is no planting here," he says. "The only planting concept is: there is no planting." There are small, stunted, valley oaks with mistletoe in the branches and the odd native sycamore, set within knee-high grasses – most of which are not native to California but were originally introduced in the 19th century as a source of pasture feed for horses. The dominant grass is *Avena fatua* (common wild oat), complemented by native coyote brush, *Baccharis pilularis*.

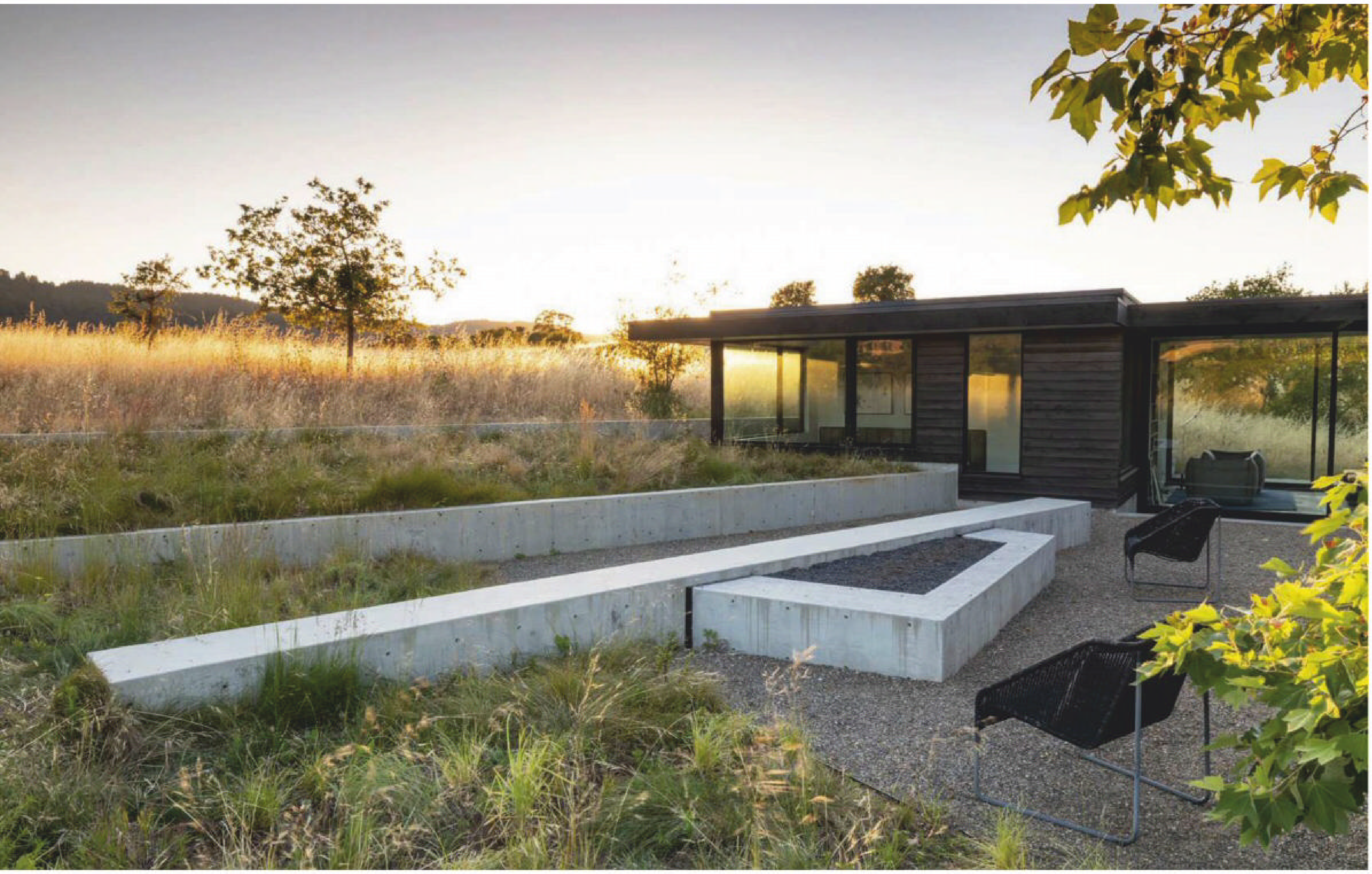
Ron is alive to the irony of an apparently natural, timeless scene such as this, in fact defined by 'invasive' plants from the Mediterranean. But he is happy to work in this context. The grasses are brown by mid-May, and he says he loves their richly burnished hues in the evening light. By June and July, they are golden-yellow in the sunshine, and in November they go grey. "I completely embrace that look," the designer concludes.

The domestic garden and terrace down by the house are edged by native plantings introduced by Ron: the small, tufty grass *Stipa pulchra* provides the basic textural note, augmented by a limited palette of Californian natives including *Sisyrinchium* (blue-eyed grass), *Achillea millefolium* and *Penstemon heterophyllus*. The flat garage roof has been planted up – mainly with sedums. "When I do these roofs now, I pretty much only use succulents," Ron explains, "because I know they will be OK out here. In California it is possible to have no rain for six months." Existing trees – mostly sycamores and oaks – have been left in situ.

An entrance path lined with spiky *Muhlenbergia* grasses, together with *Phlomis* 'Edward Bowles', leads down to a separate guesthouse building, where there are plantings of natives such as native Pacific Coast iris, *Festuca californica* and the pitcher sage, *Salvia spathacea*. The understated simplicity of the plantings here does not jar with a feeling that this place is in tune with the valley setting. ▷

Below Plantings around the terrace include, in the foreground, the native grasses *Stipa pulchra* and *Danthonia californica*.

Left The non-native grasses of the valley, chiefly *Avena fatua* (wild oat), turn golden in high summer. The Australian flax, *Dianella revoluta* 'Baby Roo', stands out against the concrete below.



▷ There is currently a vogue in US architecture for modernist houses that riff on the concept of barns and other farm buildings. At most of these properties, the garden style tends towards chic minimalism. Ron Lutsko's 'non-garden' intriguingly complements this look and could well be the start of something different. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Ron's work at **lutskoassociates.com**

CREATING A 'NON-GARDEN'

Forget the fence. If possible, delimit the boundaries and let the garden bleed into its surroundings so it appears to be a seamless whole.

Subtle definition. Nearer the house, a garden space can be indicated by means of a change of level, low walls or the use of shrubs to form a putative boundary or 'edge'.

'Native' is not everything. Intensify the plantings near the house, and if necessary beyond, by means of non-native plants as well as native plants.

Forget about flower colour; it's all about the general tone and feel of the plants.

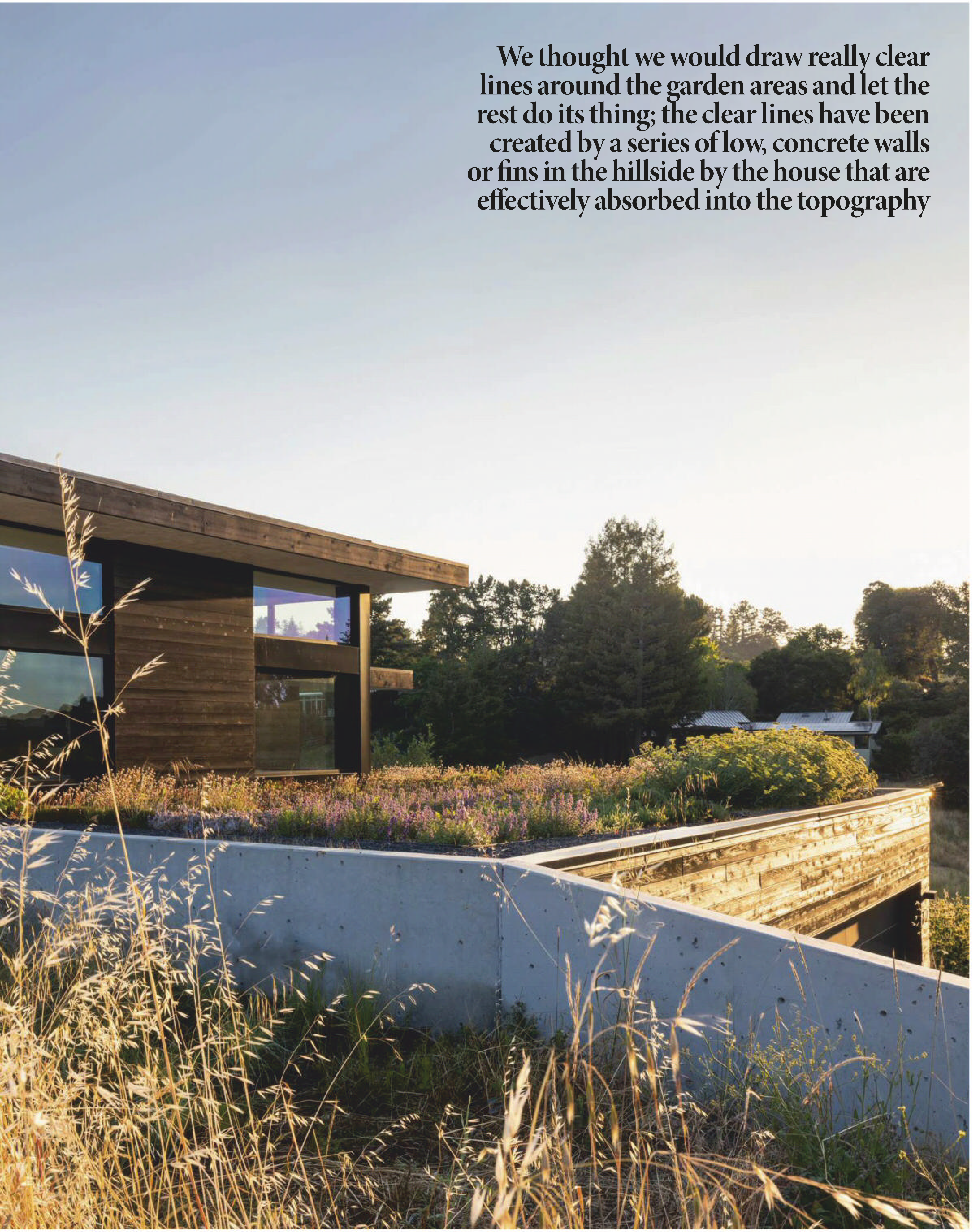
Allow and encourage colonisation of some areas by native plants – even if they are 'weeds' or seem weed-like. They may need managing, but if they thrive, they will appear authentic.

This page
Left The flowers of *Nepeta* x *faassenii* are an intense mauve blue against the golden grasses.

Right The delicate flowers of the Australian flax, *Dianella revoluta* 'Baby Roo'.

Facing page
The roof garden on top of the garage, made on 20cm of soil, contains achilleas and epilobiums, but is dominated by sedums. Ron says that such fleshy leaved plants are the only sure-fire success in drought conditions.

We thought we would draw really clear lines around the garden areas and let the rest do its thing; the clear lines have been created by a series of low, concrete walls or fins in the hillside by the house that are effectively absorbed into the topography



Tasting notes

In the first of a new series on gardeners focussed on growing for flavour we talk to veg expert Anna Greenland

WORDS **ALYS HURN** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

Anna's kitchen garden is packed with plants, all grown organically in raised beds or containers.

Anna tends a raised bed of *Agastache foeniculum* (anise hyssop).

Hard-working herbs and vegetables are the focus of Anna Greenland's small urban garden in Oxford. From the start, she pinpointed the plants she loved to eat and now, after a year, the garden is an extension of her kitchen. "It's like having a little spice cabinet," she explains.

A keen advocate of Charles Dowding's no-dig method, Anna filled the raised beds with well-rotted manure, building the soil up from the old lawn beneath. Wooden pallets and an old bathtub helped to increase the growing space and an unwanted door was repurposed to create a cold frame where she could bring on seedlings.

Anna has lots of experience of growing edibles. She was head vegetable gardener at Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxford, and the kitchen garden at Soho Farmhouse, also in Oxfordshire, was her handiwork. She's now a consultant for both. Her involvement in the taste trials at Le Manoir, gave her a clear idea of which cultivars offer the most in terms of flavour and productivity.

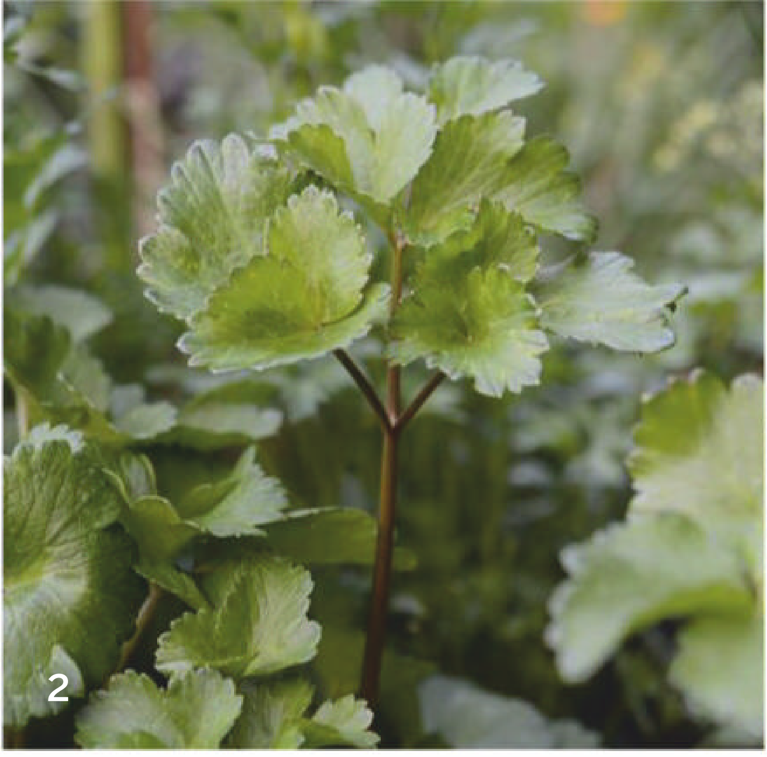
Time, and its availability, was crucial in deciding what to grow in her garden. She avoids vegetables suited to successional sowings, such as beetroot, and large-headed, one-crop types like cauliflower, as "it wouldn't be practical to keep sowing all through the summer". Asparagus is also out, since "you enjoy it for two weeks of the year, but you need a big area to produce a decent amount".

Plants that crop over a long period, such as kale and chard, went to the top of Anna's list, along with full-flavoured leaves and herbs, such as shiso and lemon verbena, used to lift the flavour of vegetables and salads. She maximises space by growing climbing edibles such as 'Tromboncino' squash and cucamelons up tepees and 'Delicata' squash along the garden wall. In the shadier parts of the garden, she grows mint, sorrel and lemon balm. Using all parts of the plant is also important. She chose to grow celery leaf over celery because you can use the leaves, stems, roots and seeds.

In particular, Anna favours health-conscious, sustainable food, and sour flavours as an antidote to sweetness. "Flavour is headed towards realising the value of plants and all the sensations they can bring," she says. "People are looking for that hit of what vegetables truly taste like." □

Turn the page for Anna's choice of 18 key herbs and vegetables for a kitchen garden

1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3

18 KEY PLANTS

1 *Aloysia citrodora* (lemon verbena) An all-star herb with a lemony, sherberty taste that is wonderful steeped in hot water as tea, infused in oil and used with fish, or used as a refreshing flavouring for sorbet. It has a divine smell that can instantly elevate your mood with a few sniffs. 2.5m. AGM*. RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b†.

2 *Ligusticum scoticum* (Scots lovage) Low-growing plant with vibrant, red stems and pretty leaves. Great as attractive groundcover and works well in pots too. It gives a punchy hit of flavour, a bit like celery or parsley. Make a herb butter with the finely shredded leaves – delicious with fresh radishes. It also pairs well with eggs. You can steam the stems too, and use the seeds in biscuits or bread. Very easy to grow. 90cm.

3 *Perilla frutescens* var. *purpurascens* (purple-leaved beefsteak plant or purple shiso) There is an air of intrigue about this plant, with its striking, dark-purple/red leaves and pretty little purple flowers late in the season. Perfect if you want to maximise a small space but include beautiful, structural plants. Flavour is a mixture of cinnamon and basil, a musky, bitter-sweet herb that is great in Asian dishes. Use young leaves in salads and larger leaves in stir fries, or cook in tempura batter. The leaves also produce a vibrant red dye, great for adding to pickling liquid. It is tricky getting it to germinate, but worth the effort. If you can't get it going, Jekka McVicar sells healthy plants from her nursery (see suppliers' list on page 88). 1.2m.

4 *Beta vulgaris* 'Flamingo Pink' (chard) Chard is incredible as it keeps on giving, and is very nutritious and easy to grow. I steam it and then sautée it with garlic and butter. You get two vegetables in one plant, as the leaves and stalks have quite different flavours. The stalks are robust and earthy – similar to beetroot – and the leaves have that iron flavour that tastes like it is adding years to your life. Both work well with cheeses, cream, pine nuts and raisins or added to pies and galettes. Cook the stems a little longer than the leaves. Sow in modules in spring and you can be cropping all the way through to Christmas. 45cm.

5 *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum* (ice plant) This is much loved by chefs for its glistening appearance and succulent leaves. It is juicy, crunchy and a little salty, reminiscent of some of the sea vegetables. Chefs like tiny pieces for decoration, but I let mine grow and harvest side shoots for salads. Grow it with your salad vegetables – it sprawls along the bed and doesn't take up much room. 20cm.

6 *Salvia elegans* 'Scarlet Pineapple' (pineapple sage) Add leaves to cocktails for a refreshing pineapple aroma. It also works well chopped finely with fruit. It has beautiful flowers in the autumn, but it isn't hardy, so you need to bring it indoors before the frost. 1m. RHS H2. USDA 8a-10b.

7 *Ocimum basilicum* 'Cinnamon' (cinnamon basil) I love all basil. There are many wonderful flavours besides cinnamon, including lime, lemon, Thai and so on. 'Cinnamon' produces lovely purple flowers. I use the leaves in summer spring rolls, and make cinnamon basil tea with a squeeze of lime. 45cm.

8 *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum' (bronze fennel) This herb – not bulb – fennel is another chef's favourite. The edible flowers can be used for decoration. If you shake the pollen off, it looks like a dusting of gold – great on fish dishes or even in desserts (like fennel pollen ice cream) – and it also adds a subtle aniseed flavour. Dishes also look beautiful with the addition of fennel fronds. When seeds develop later in the year, pick the green seeds to nibble on for a punch of flavour or add to dressings, or allow them to dry on the plant and store for later use. I steep fennel seeds in hot water with lemon verbena for a refreshing tea and they are said to be good for digestion and bloating. You will continue to get fronds into the winter, so this is a really good-value plant in a small space. 1.8m. RHS H5. USDA 4a-9b.

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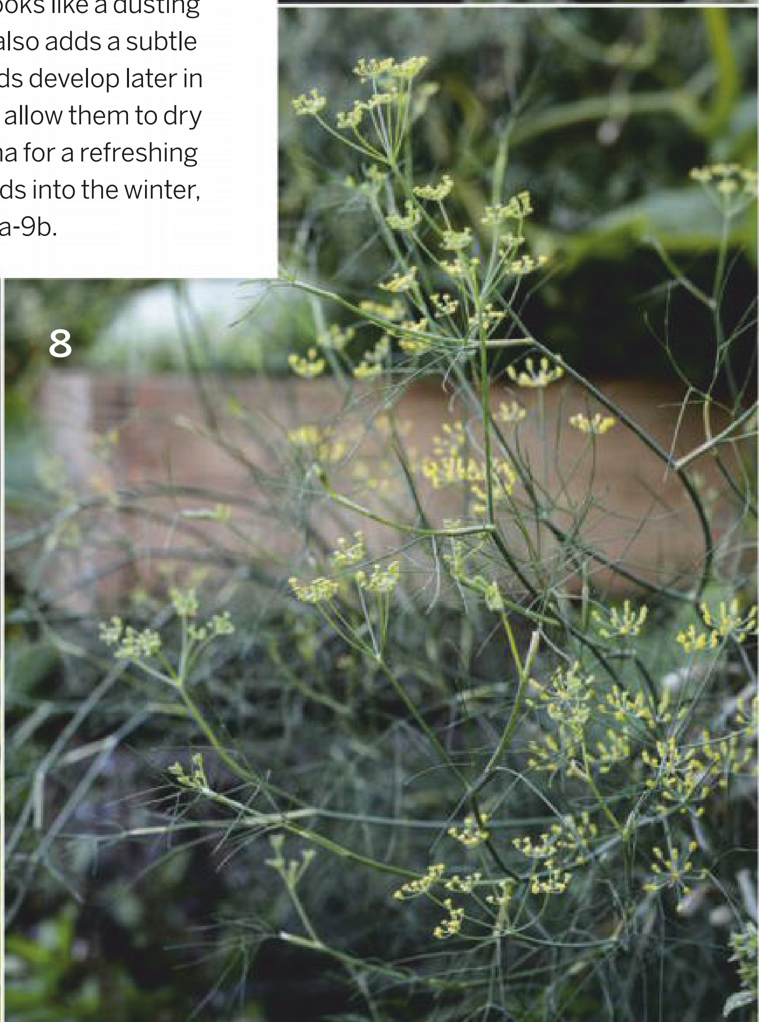
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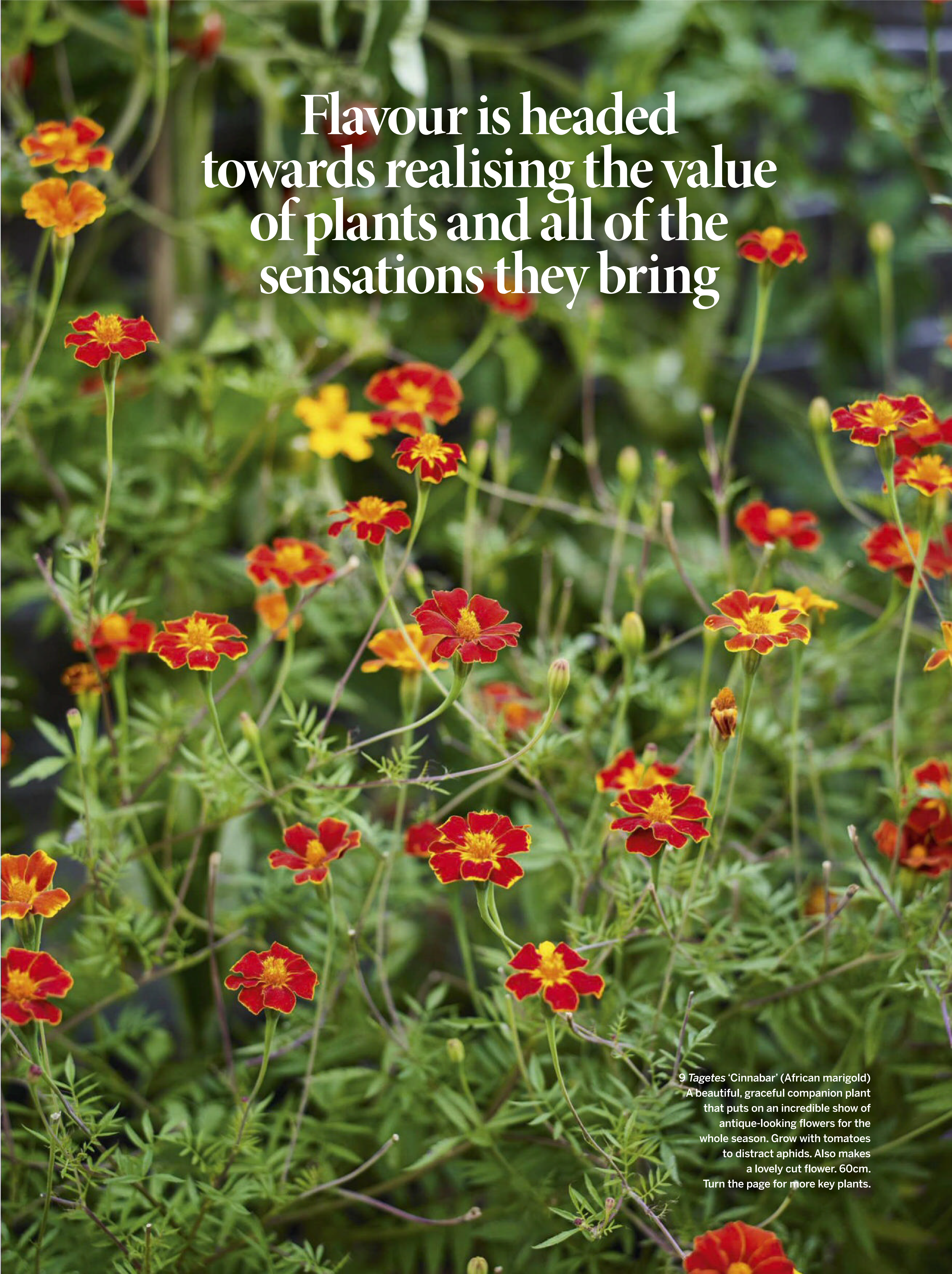
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

Flavour is headed towards realising the value of plants and all of the sensations they bring



9 *Tagetes* 'Cinnabar' (African marigold) A beautiful, graceful companion plant that puts on an incredible show of antique-looking flowers for the whole season. Grow with tomatoes to distract aphids. Also makes a lovely cut flower. 60cm. Turn the page for more key plants.

10

11

12

18 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

10 *Solanum lycopersicum* 'Stupice' (tomato) This tomato produces flavoursome fruits outdoors in the British summer, which is brilliant if you have no room for a greenhouse. It tastes great – the right balance of sweet and sharp. It is an old cultivar from Czechia and crops heavily from early summer all the way through. If you are a lazy gardener, this one is great as you don't need to pinch out all the side shoots or stake it if you don't want to – you can just let it ramble. 2m.

11 *Cucurbita maxima* 'Ute Indian' (winter squash) I grew this for the first time this year and will certainly do so again. It's chestnutty, sweet and earthy, and one winter squash provided meals for a whole week – roasted, as soup, and in curry. It would be great for making ravioli as it's not too wet. I grew mine in a raised bed; it put on lots of growth and I trained it along the top of my fence.

12 *Pelargonium* 'Attar of Roses' (scented geranium) Lovely for infusing delicate rose flavour into cream for panna cottas or ice creams. Also makes a beautiful syrup for drizzling over desserts. The flowers are edible and look pretty in salads or on dessert plates. Dig up and bring indoors over winter as it's not hardy. Works well in a pot for a small space. 60cm. AGM. RHS H1C.

13 *Cucurbita moschata* 'Tromboncino' (squash) A great plant for a small space as you can grow it up and over a teepee or fence. The squashes are the shape of a trombone, and can get as big, but at this size they are best used for decoration. I tend to crop them like small courgettes throughout the summer for their gentle, nutty flavour – far more delicate than a courgette. 1.2m.

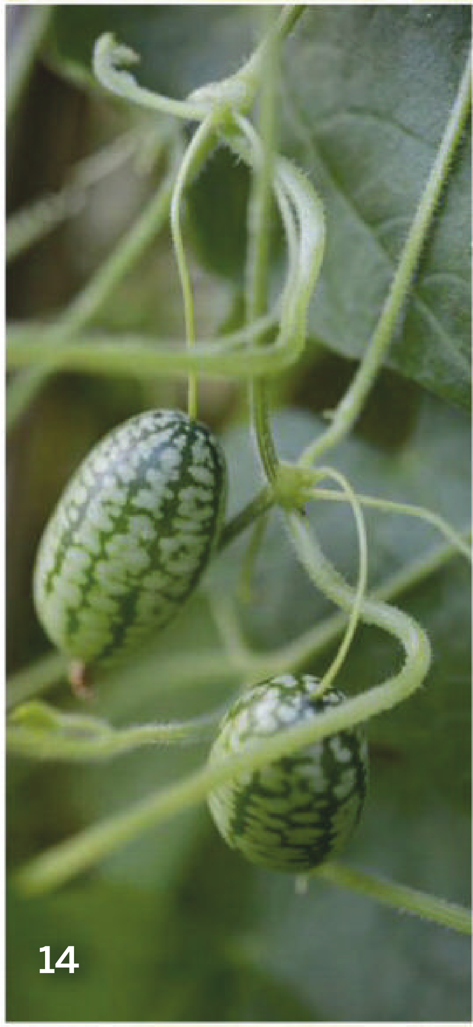
14 *Melothria scabra* (cucamelon) These are great for a small space as they produce good yields and don't taken up much room. I grow mine up hazel pea sticks and they romp away with no intervention needed. They look like little watermelons, but have a very different taste. When you eat them, they produce a sharp, cucumber-like burst of flavour in your mouth, which makes you realise why they are also known as Mexican sour gherkins. The citrus tang and crunch makes them a perfect addition to summer salads and I love them in a salade niçoise. They also make great pickles (pickled whole), which are perfect as presents as they look so pretty. 2m.

15 *Achillea ageratum* (English mace) This is a relatively unknown herb, but deserves a place in the herb garden, for beauty and flavour. Not to be confused with mace (the outer husk of nutmeg), it is a member of the *Achillea* genus. The flavour is somewhere between caraway and mint. It works well chopped into soups, stews or sausages, or with vegetables and chicken, but use it sparingly. Let it flower and you will have beautiful lemon-yellow and white blooms in summer. 45cm.

16 *Cucurbita pepo* 'Burpee's Golden' (courgette) This is a great, old, open-pollinated courgette. I love the sunshine colour of yellow courgettes – it marks summer for me. For a go-to summer dish, use raw, julienned strips in a salad with lots of mint, dill and olive oil. Because the flavour is so subtle, it is a great vehicle for adding in an abundance of herbs, oils and vinegars. The difference in flavour between a green and yellow courgette is negligible, but the cheerful colour alone somehow improves the taste for me, and I would argue that yellow courgettes are slightly sweeter. 75cm.

17 *Agastache foeniculum* (anise hyssop) One of my favourite herbs. The chopped leaves bring out an earthy sweetness in salads and vegetables. The flowers are pretty scattered over salads too. Sprigs look attractive in cocktails and add an interesting aroma. Bees love this plant too. 70cm.

13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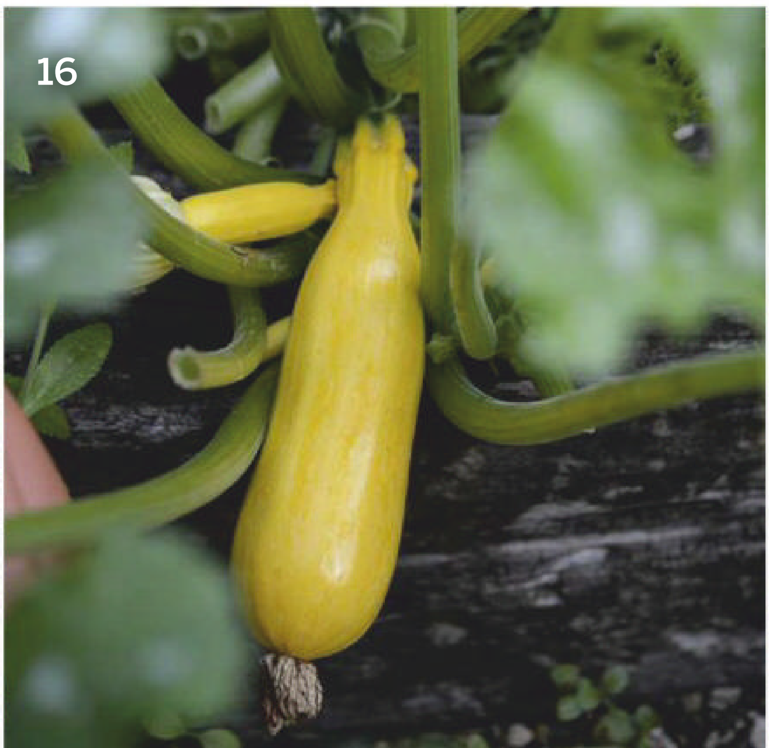
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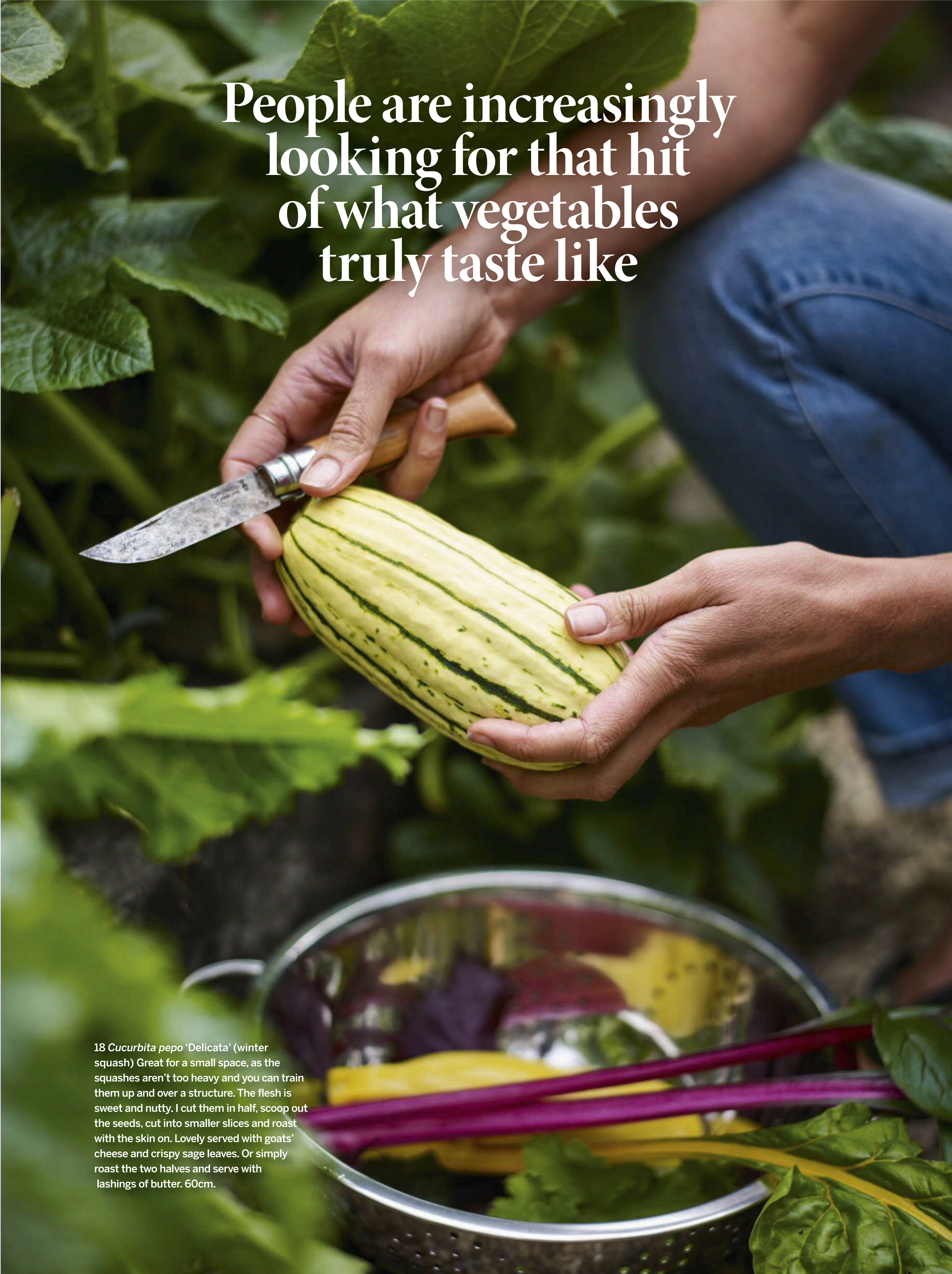

> People are increasingly looking for that hit of what vegetables truly taste like

18 *Cucurbita pepo* 'Delicata' (winter squash) Great for a small space, as the squashes aren't too heavy and you can train them up and over a structure. The flesh is sweet and nutty. I cut them in half, scoop out the seeds, cut into smaller slices and roast with the skin on. Lovely served with goats' cheese and crispy sage leaves. Or simply roast the two halves and serve with lashings of butter. 60cm.

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Our favourite edible seed suppliers

If you're looking for inspiration for herbs and vegetables to grow at home, take a look at our selection of the best seed suppliers

WORDS SORREL EVERTON

CHILTERN SEEDS

There is always something to look forward to in Chiltern's herb and vegetable selections. This year it has included British basil – selected specifically for growing in the UK and climbing bean 'Cobra', encouragingly resistant to a variable British summer. Look out for beetroot 'Crapaudine', new to Chiltern Seeds. This is one of the oldest beetroot cultivars, carrot shaped and with an oddly rough skin (resembling its namesake derived from the French for toad). Underneath is a richly coloured flesh with superior flavour.
01491 824675, chilternseeds.org.uk

JEKKA'S HERB FARM

If you are growing for flavour then herbs are an essential, and probably your best guide as to which to grow is award-winner Jekka McVicar. The nursery stocks 140 varieties of herb, with notables including winter purslane as an excellent winter salad crop; summer savoury, excellent with all forms of beans and pulses; and blue hyssop for its savoury minty/thyme flavour – and pollinator popular blue flowers. **01454 418878, jekkasherbfarm.com**

MOLE SEEDS

An independent seed merchant with good selection sourced from some of the best seed producers. Anyone looking to current food trends should check the sections on crops best suited to baby leaf and microgreens harvesting. Although wholesale, Mole Seeds will supply anyone looking for larger quantities, so great for smallholding owners and gardening groups.
wholesale.moleseeds.co.uk

PENNARD PLANTS

A 2019 RHS Master Grower, Pennard Plants sells one of the largest selections of edible plants, heritage and heirloom seeds, fruits and herbs. All the stock is UK grown, many of it by themselves in their Victorian walled garden in Somerset. For those keen to grow their own plant protein, Pennard stocks amaranthus and quinoa seeds.
01749 860039, pennardplants.com

REAL SEEDS

Everything in Real Seeds' offering has been chosen only after trialling to check its success both in the vegetable garden and in the kitchen. All seed are open pollinated (non-hybrid) so you can collect and resow your own seed from one year to the next.
01239 821107, realseeds.co.uk

SEA SPRING SEEDS

Every vegetable cultivar has been tested before it's included in the catalogue. For 2019 it is encouraging us to try 'mange tout' chilli peppers. Cultivars such as 'Hungarian Hot Wax' and 'Frigitello' can be harvested small and either fried or grilled to be eaten whole in the same way as Padrón peppers.
01308 897898, seaspringseeds.co.uk

SEED CO-OPERATIVE

An initiative was set up on the belief that the future of food needs to be rooted in a diversity of genetics and wildlife. All seed are from open pollinated varieties, adapted to organic growing systems. Finalists in the 2017 BBC Food and Farming Awards.
01775 840592, seedcooperative.org.uk

SEEDS OF ITALY / FRANCHI

Paolo Arrigo who is a passionate seedsmen has declared a climate emergency on seed biodiversity. "In just 100 years, 94 per cent of the world's heritage veg has gone," says Paolo. Franchi focuses on the remaining six per cent, promoting them for their taste and regional diversity and including cultivars from the Slow Food Ark of Taste, the register of foods at risk of being lost.
020 8427 5020, seedsofitaly.com

TAMAR ORGANICS

A good range of vegetables for the organic gardener along with helpful, clear, growing advice. Tamar Organics supports charity Joliba Trust working in central Mali to help fund horticultural projects.
01579 371087, tamarorganics.co.uk

THOMAS ETTY

Among the range of vegetables offered by Thomas Etty are 52 perennial vegetables – an option for grow your own often overlooked. Examples such as sea orach, tuberous pea, perennial broccoli and skirret are worth having a look at, alongside more unusual veg choices, such as the pink 'Roscoff' onion from Brittany with its unique flavour good for eating raw or cooked and 'Tall Telephone' pea yielding eight to ten peas per large pod.
01460 298249, thomasetty.co.uk

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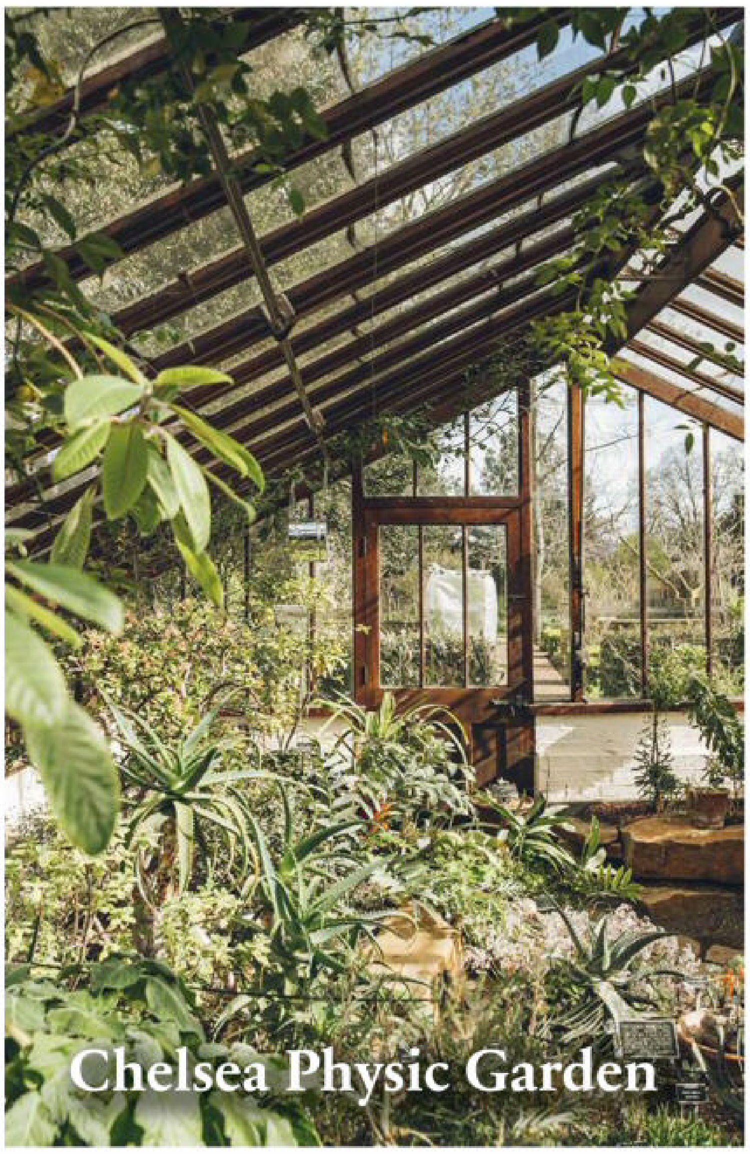

Nestled in the grounds of Magdalene College, **Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum** was originally founded as a physic garden in 1621, to grow plants for medical research. It is one of the oldest scientific gardens in the world and contains over 8,000 species of plants.

Partner Garden

The first record of the West Sussex estate on which Grade II-listed **Borde Hill** sits dates all the way back to 1534, with the garden first planted in 1893 and opened to the public in 1965 upon becoming a charity. The rose garden and impressive collection of champion trees are particular highlights.

Partner Garden

Great Dixter House & Gardens, north of Hastings brings us slightly more up to date: built just before the Great War by Sir Edwin Lutyens by combining an existing 15th-Century building with other bits and bobs, including a similar structure brought over from Kent.

Partner Garden

Guests of our Friends do not gain free entry to our partner gardens

ONLINE

Go online and sign up at **chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/become-a-member**

BY PHONE

You can call us on 020 7349 6471

Chelsea Physic Garden,
66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS.

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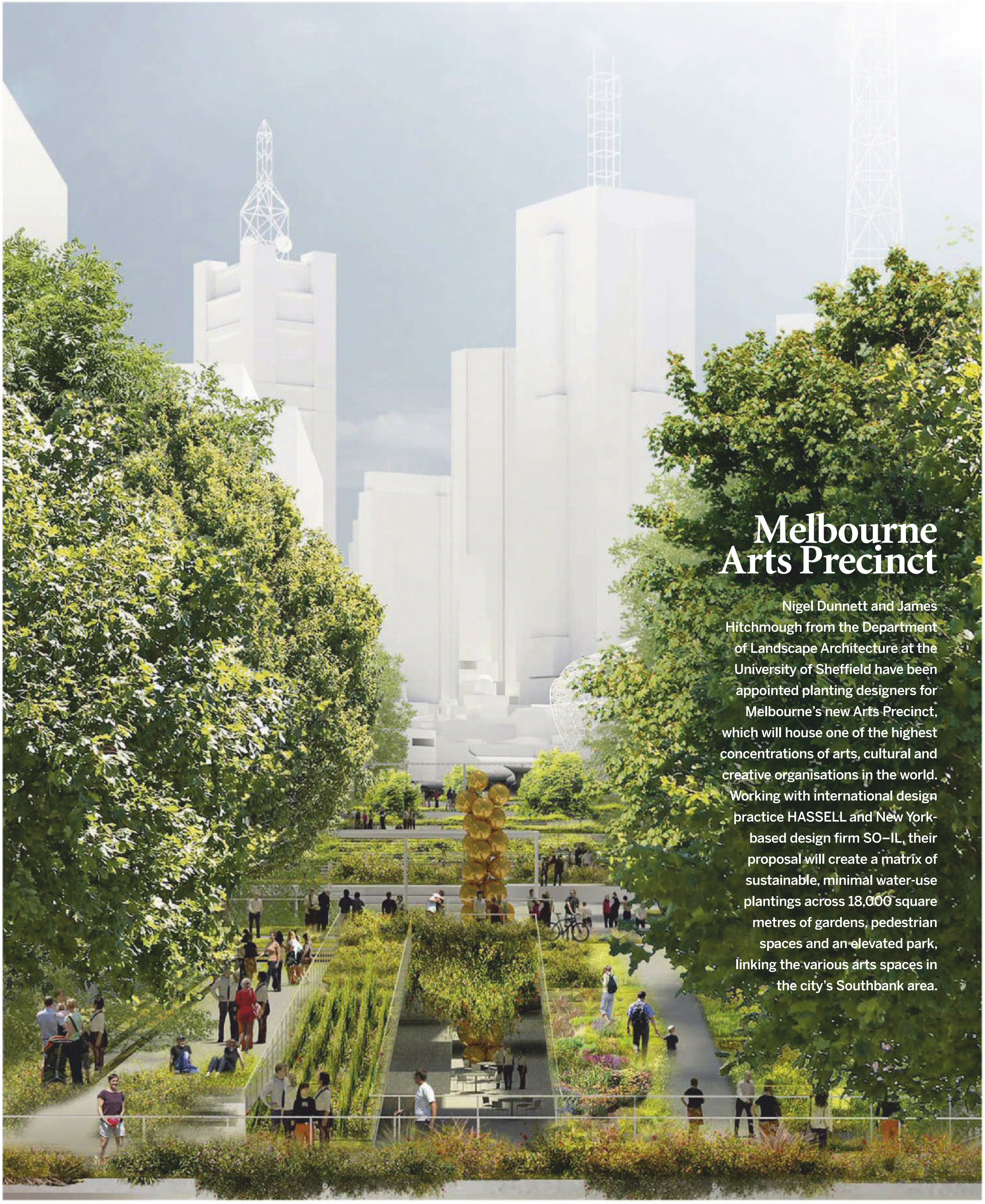
DESIGN

News, ideas and sourcebook



Melbourne Arts Precinct

Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough from the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Sheffield have been appointed planting designers for Melbourne's new Arts Precinct, which will house one of the highest concentrations of arts, cultural and creative organisations in the world. Working with international design practice HASSELL and New York-based design firm SO–IL, their proposal will create a matrix of sustainable, minimal water-use plantings across 18,000 square metres of gardens, pedestrian spaces and an elevated park, linking the various arts spaces in the city's Southbank area.

‘In a corner of the Amazon, my husband’s values live on’

My husband David was passionate about Christian Aid’s work to end poverty. He wanted that passion to live on, even after he’d gone.

Thanks to the gift he left in his Will, David is still helping to fund Christian Aid projects around the world. I was privileged to travel with Christian Aid to the Amazon to meet some of the people David’s legacy is supporting. These amazing communities are protecting the rainforest, which we all need to reduce the effects of climate change. So although David is no longer here in body, I know he’s still part of that forest – and part of this world.

How might your values live on?

If you would like to learn more about gifts in Wills, please get in touch.

Phone **020 7523 2173**

Email **jclarke@christian-aid.org**

Visit **christianaid.org.uk/legacies**

Post **Complete the form and return to:**
Christian Aid, PO Box 100,
London SE1 7RT.

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Please tick as appropriate

☐ Please send me my free guide to Wills and Legacies

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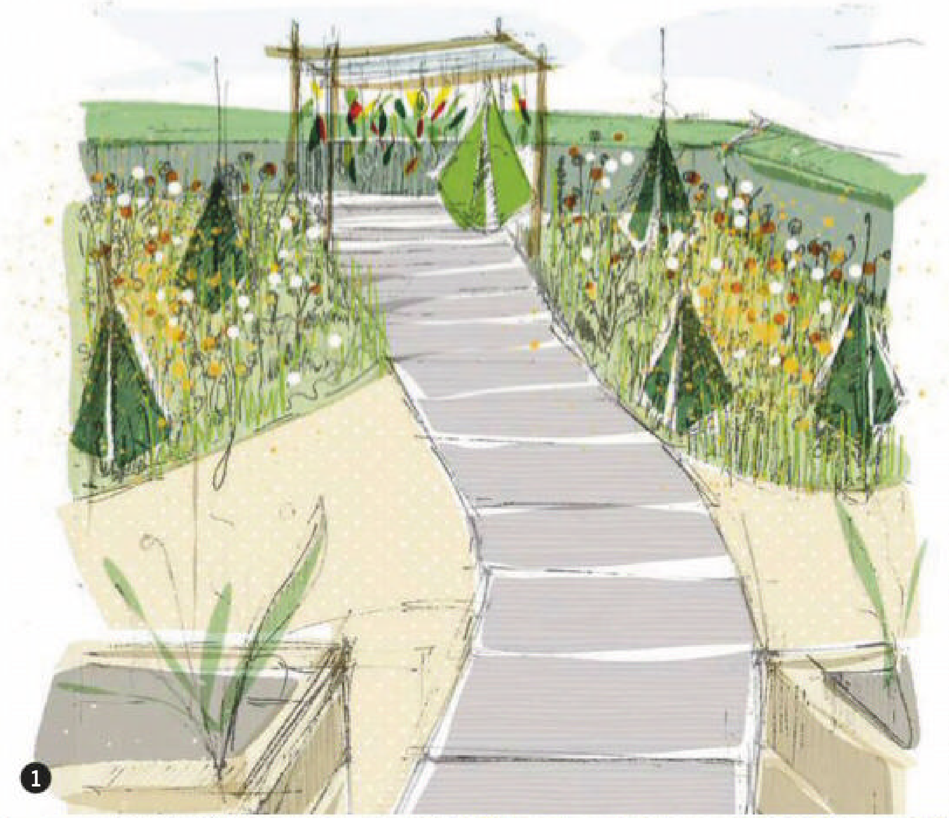
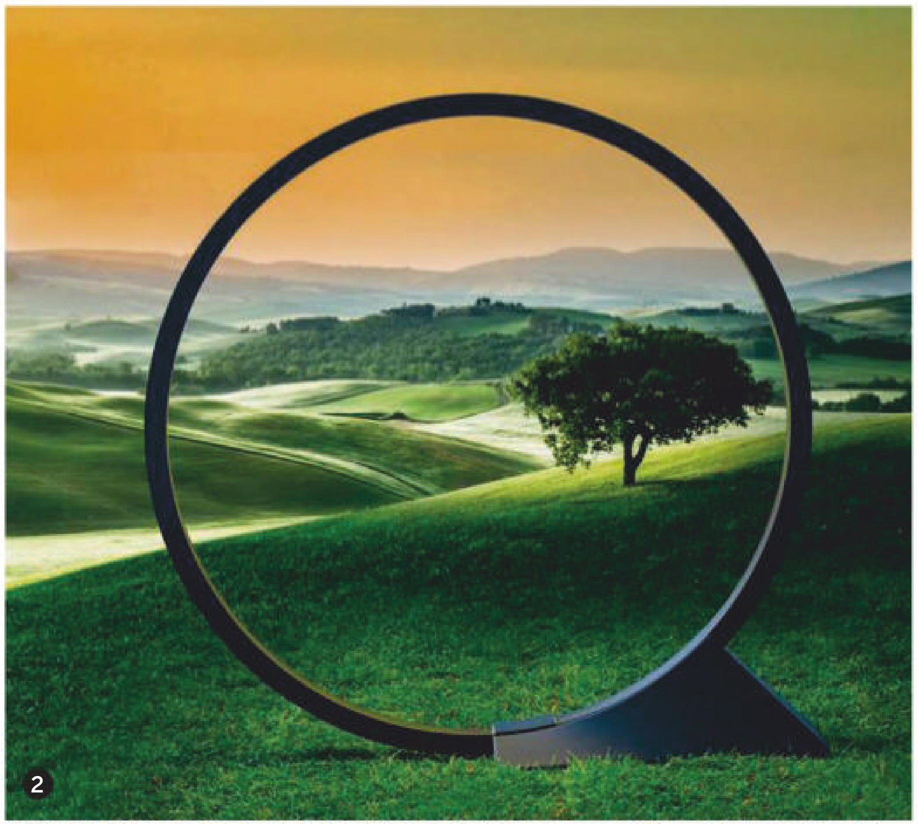
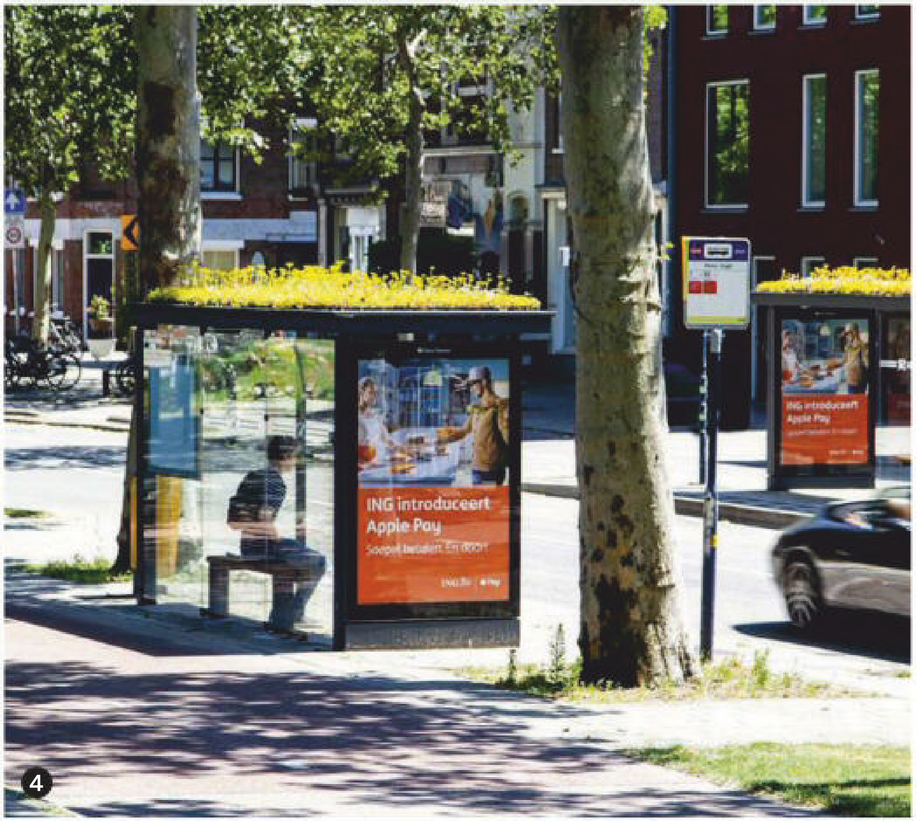
NEWS

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**







① CREATION STATION

The most recent garden to be designed for the children's hospice charity Greenfingers, the Garden of Colour at Claire House Children's Hospice in Bebington, Wirral, has won the Specifi Manchester Landscape Project of the Year award for Manchester-based landscape architects, CW Studio. The garden offers a journey through discrete spaces, starting at the Creation Station, via Falling Leaves (with brightly coloured Perspex leaves dangling overhead) and the Rainbow Meadow to a Quiet Place with seating and water. Finally, the path weaves through spring bulbs and long grass to a birch grove.

② SHINE A LIGHT

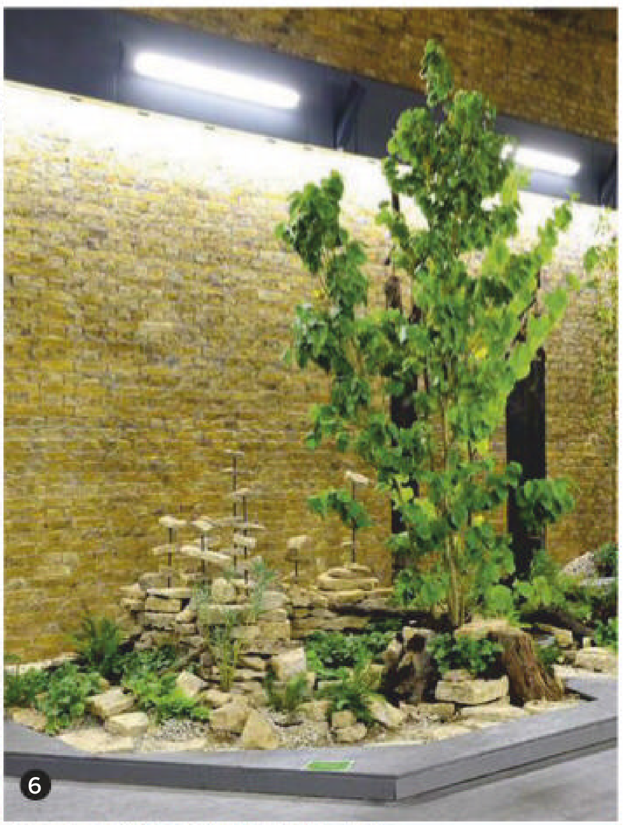
The O Lamp, designed by Alejandro Aravena of Chilean architecture firm Elemental for Italian lighting specialists Artemide, is fitted with sensors that ensure that it only illuminates when needed, thus saving energy. When not in use it becomes an elegant, sculptural element that can frame the landscape or a focal point in the garden. Available in two sizes (45cm or 90cm in diameter) and in a black or white finish, it has a thin, aluminium profile and can be easily moved around. It can be suspended or placed on the ground, creating opportunities for illumination at different levels in the garden.

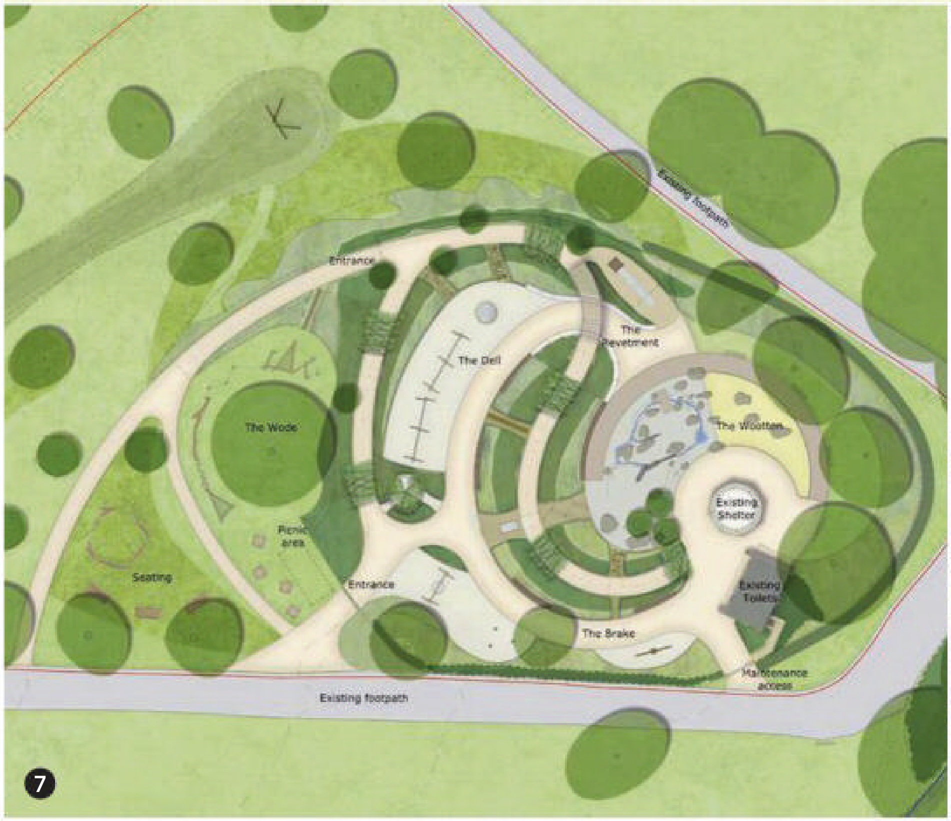
③ DESIGN PROCESS

A new film featuring interviews with three members of the Society of Garden Designers (SGD) outlines the main elements of the process garden owners can expect when employing a professional garden designer. The footage, shot on location in gardens in Sussex, Hampshire and Sheffield, includes images of more than 50 finished gardens designed by members of the SGD showing the range of styles and the scope of the projects that have been undertaken. How to Find and Work with a Professional Garden Designer is available from **youtube.com**

④ BEE-FRIENDLY BUS STOPS

Utrecht, the fourth largest city in the Netherlands, has boosted the biodiversity and sustainability of its public spaces with the installation of planted roofs on more than 300 bus stops. More than half of the country's 358 species of bees are endangered and it is hoped that these roofs, which are planted mainly with sedums and wildflowers, will provide forage for bees and other pollinators, while also capturing air pollutants. The bus stops are lit by energy-efficient, LED lights powered by windmills, and are fitted with bamboo benches for waiting passengers.





⑤ THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

LumiPod is a small, modern, prefab cabin with a retractable, curved window that provides panoramic views of the surroundings. Designed and manufactured by French window specialists Lumicene, the steel-framed cabin, which has a usable floor area of 17 square metres and is fitted with a bedroom and wardrobe, plus bathroom, rests on four screw piles to minimise the impact on the installation site. The curved, exterior wall is clad in wood in a choice of finishes, including burned. Installation can be completed in two days.

lumi-pod.com/en

⑥ NEW FORMS

Four garden installations have been commissioned for London Bridge station by Team London Bridge with support from Network Rail to highlight the importance of green spaces in city life and sustainable approaches to design. Designers Ula Maria, Alexandra Noble, Sarah Wilson, and Caitlin and Tessa McLaughlin have used materials recycled from the 2019 RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival to create four temporary 8m x 3.5m spaces. At the end of the two-month project the materials and plants will have afterlives in local community projects.

teamlondonbridge.co.uk

⑦ ALL WORK FOR MORE PLAY

Work has begun on a new playground designed by LUC for London's Regent's Park. The design has been informed by the undulating character of the existing space, created from the rubble of St Katharine's Lodge, which was bombed during the Second World War. Several zoned areas spread over and around a large mound, with an accessible bridge linking it to another landform. Natural materials are used to create features that encourage social and creative play. New shrubs and tree planting help to integrate the space into the wider landscape of the park.

⑧ LIVING ROUNDABOUT

Hydroponic living walls are being installed on a highways scheme at the newly reconstructed Millbrook Roundabout in Southampton, Hampshire. The flagship project is being undertaken by Balfour Beatty Living Places, using green-wall technology designed by Biotecture. Ten columns appearing to support the flyover above will be clad in greenery grown on 6m-high steel frames. The plants will help to remove pollutants by absorbing gases such as carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide as well as hazardous particulates. Work is due to be completed this autumn.

OXYGEN, DARRYL MOORE_CITYSCAPES

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

What's your LEGACY?

From inspiring your grandchildren to be passionate about gardening to leaving a lasting gift to a good cause such as Unicef, it's rewarding to pass on a legacy

Whether you enjoy strolling around idyllic parks or prefer to get hands-on with planting and pruning, gardens can offer a much-needed distraction from the buzz of modern life. So, it's no wonder you'd like to pass this appreciation on to your grandchildren.

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Want to pass on your love of gardening to your grandchildren? Here are some ways you could inspire them.

- Show your grandchildren how to sow seeds, so they can experience the reward of watching their plants grow and bloom into life.
- A trip to see one of the many stunning open gardens around the country is sure to spark an appreciation of the colour and beauty of nature.
- Do your grandchildren know the difference between fuchsias and cornflowers? Take them on a nature trail, teaching them how to identify flowers and plants along the way.

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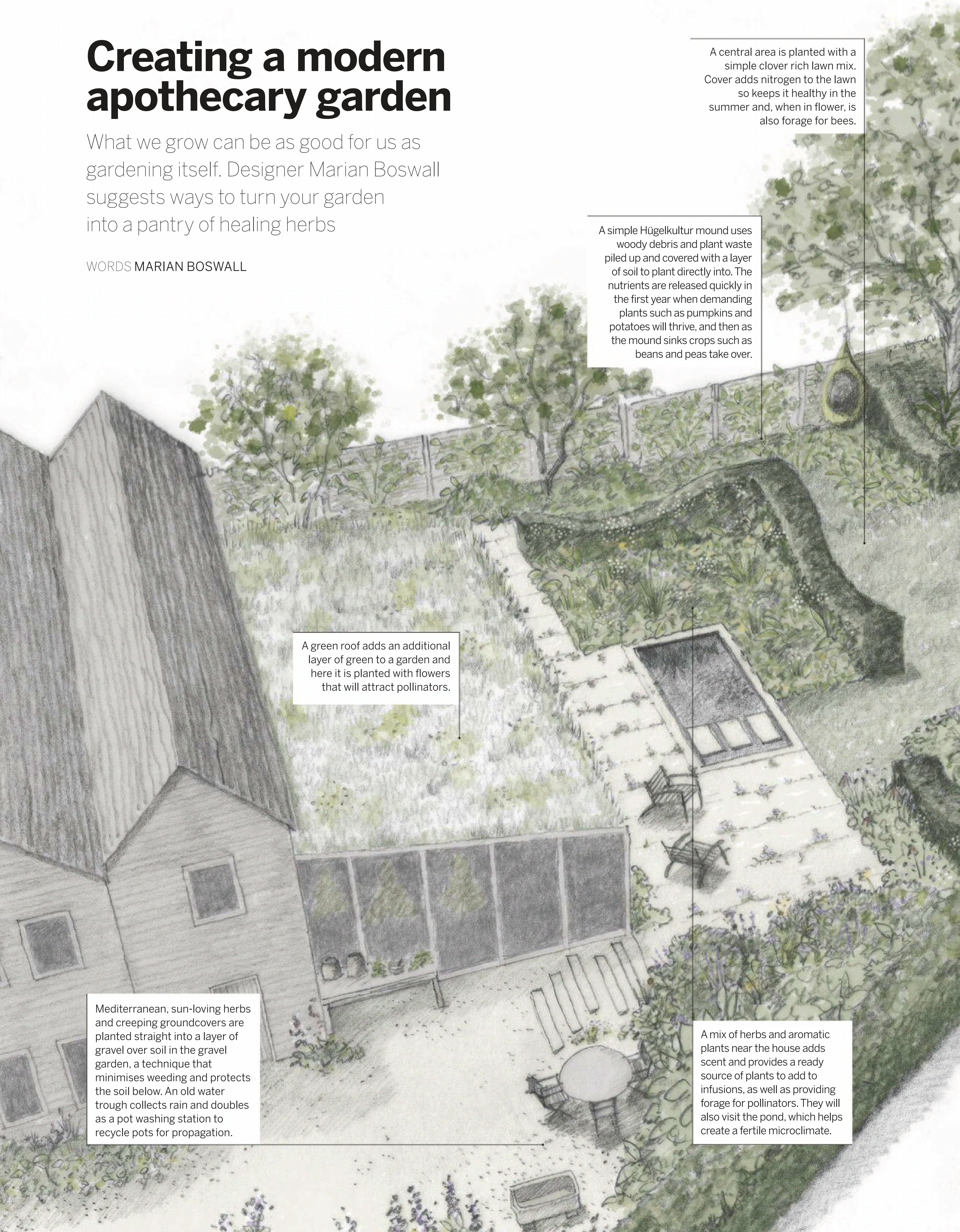
After friends and family, please consider leaving a gift to Unicef in your will. To find out more or to request your free Gifts in Wills guide, visit **unicef.org.uk/legacy**

Creating a modern apothecary garden

What we grow can be as good for us as gardening itself. Designer Marian Boswall suggests ways to turn your garden into a pantry of healing herbs

WORDS MARIAN BOSWALL



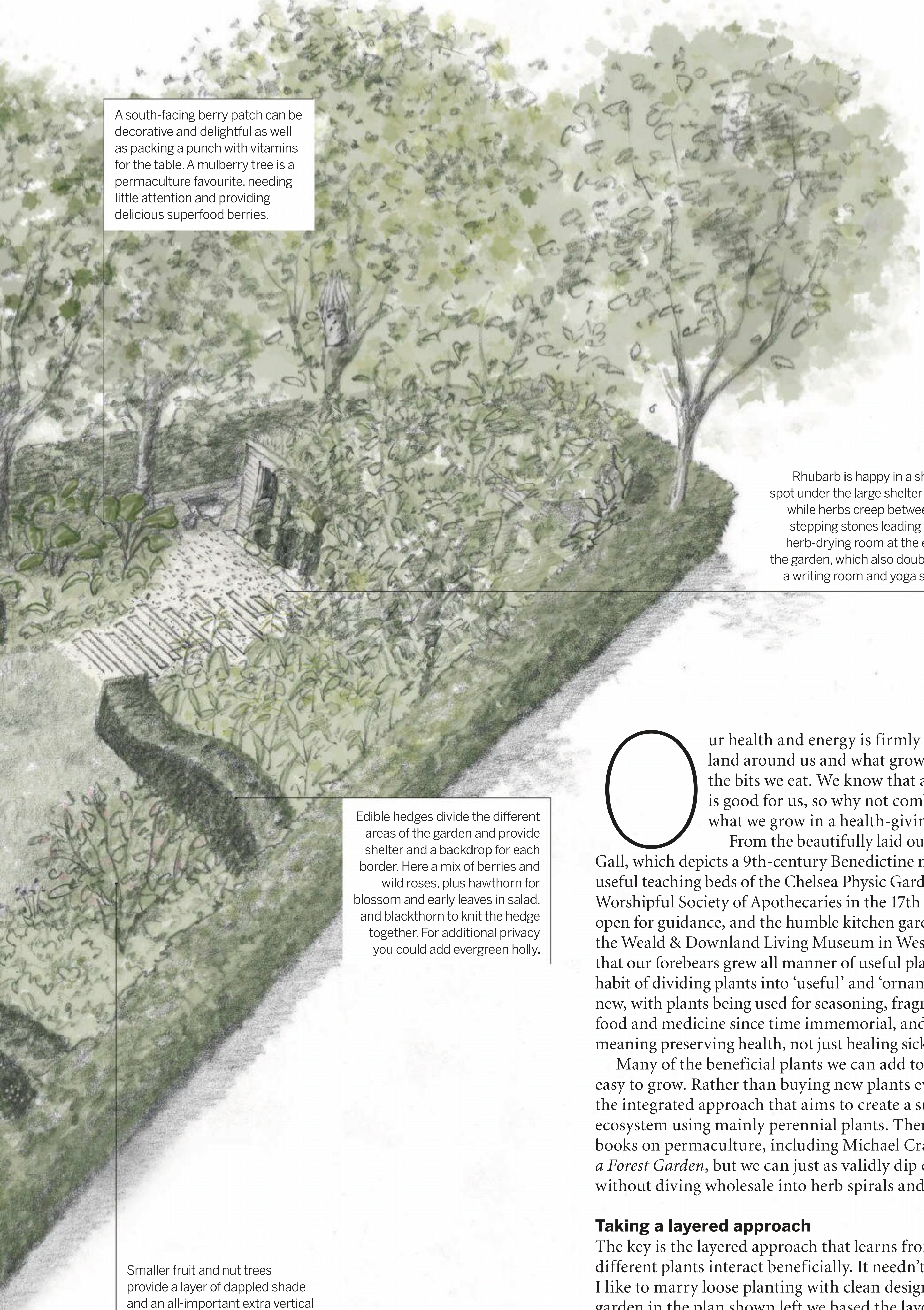
A central area is planted with a simple clover rich lawn mix. Cover adds nitrogen to the lawn so keeps it healthy in the summer and, when in flower, is also forage for bees.

A simple Hügelkultur mound uses woody debris and plant waste piled up and covered with a layer of soil to plant directly into. The nutrients are released quickly in the first year when demanding plants such as pumpkins and potatoes will thrive, and then as the mound sinks crops such as beans and peas take over.

A green roof adds an additional layer of green to a garden and here it is planted with flowers that will attract pollinators.

Mediterranean, sun-loving herbs and creeping groundcovers are planted straight into a layer of gravel over soil in the gravel garden, a technique that minimises weeding and protects the soil below. An old water trough collects rain and doubles as a pot washing station to recycle pots for propagation.

A mix of herbs and aromatic plants near the house adds scent and provides a ready source of plants to add to infusions, as well as providing forage for pollinators. They will also visit the pond, which helps create a fertile microclimate.



A south-facing berry patch can be decorative and delightful as well as packing a punch with vitamins for the table. A mulberry tree is a permaculture favourite, needing little attention and providing delicious superfood berries.

Rhubarb is happy in a shadier spot under the large shelter trees, while herbs creep between the stepping stones leading to the herb-drying room at the end of the garden, which also doubles as a writing room and yoga studio.

Edible hedges divide the different areas of the garden and provide shelter and a backdrop for each border. Here a mix of berries and wild roses, plus hawthorn for blossom and early leaves in salad, and blackthorn to knit the hedge together. For additional privacy you could add evergreen holly.

Smaller fruit and nut trees provide a layer of dappled shade and an all-important extra vertical aspect. Collect fruit early to catch them before the wasps, and compost any you can't use or add them to a wormery. Hazel nuts can be coppiced on rotation to keep them small, and stems used to create stakes and arches.

SOPHIE POLLOCK FOR MBLA

Our health and energy is firmly entwined with the land around us and what grows on it, including the bits we eat. We know that a little gardening is good for us, so why not combine this with what we grow in a health-giving garden?

From the beautifully laid out Plan of Saint Gall, which depicts a 9th-century Benedictine monastery, to the useful teaching beds of the Chelsea Physic Garden, founded by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries in the 17th century and still open for guidance, and the humble kitchen gardens on display at the Weald & Downland Living Museum in West Sussex, we know that our forebears grew all manner of useful plants. Indeed our habit of dividing plants into 'useful' and 'ornamental' is relatively new, with plants being used for seasoning, fragrance, dye, fibre, food and medicine since time immemorial, and medicine meaning preserving health, not just healing sickness.

Many of the beneficial plants we can add to our food are very easy to grow. Rather than buying new plants every year, I like the integrated approach that aims to create a sustainable mini ecosystem using mainly perennial plants. There are excellent books on permaculture, including Michael Crawford's *Creating a Forest Garden*, but we can just as validly dip our toes in without diving wholesale into herb spirals and Hügelkultur.

Taking a layered approach

The key is the layered approach that learns from nature how different plants interact beneficially. It needn't even look unruly. I like to marry loose planting with clean design lines and in the garden in the plan shown left we based the layout on artist Ben Nicholson's overlapping cube shapes to complement the contemporary house and create a garden in layered blocks.

The approach starts with shelter, especially on a windy site. Plan for a shelter belt with edible hedges, climbers on vertical surfaces and different height trees. In a smaller site fruit and nut

Turn to page 100 to continue ▷

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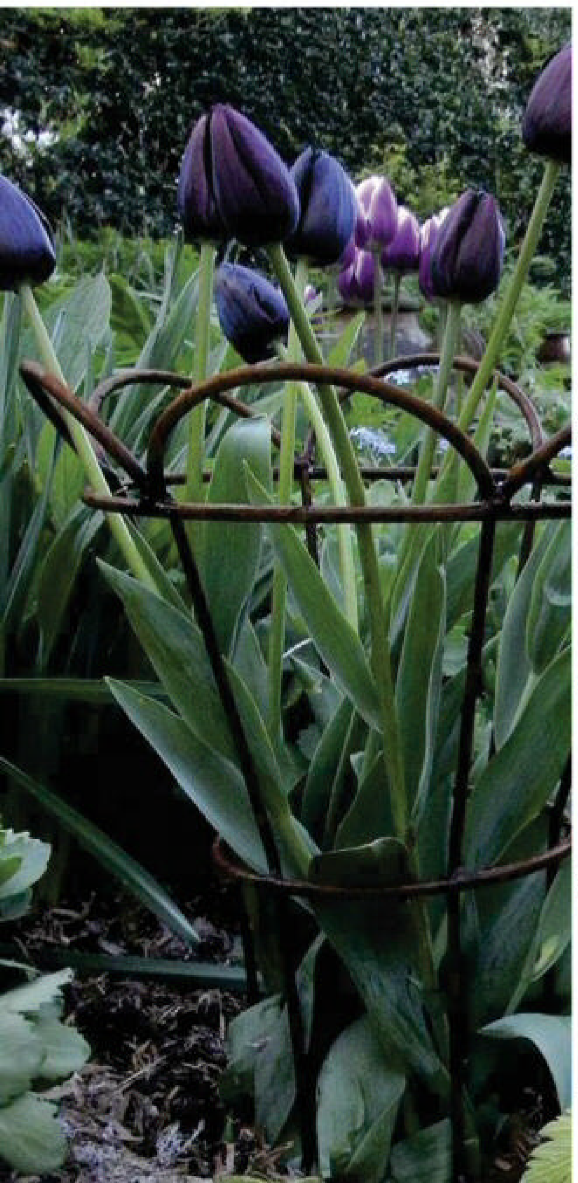

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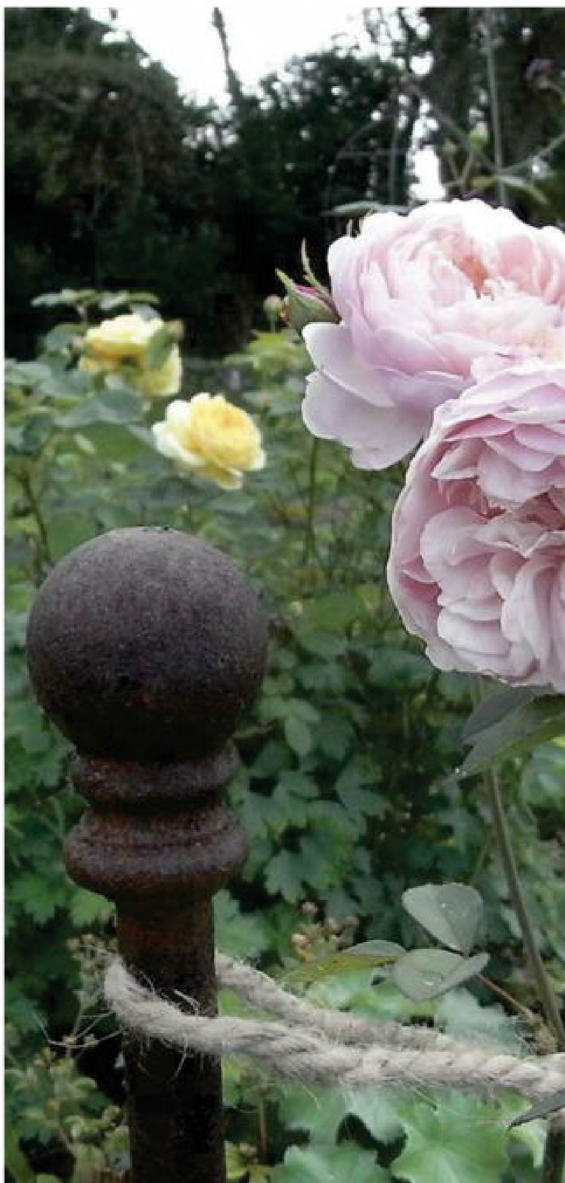
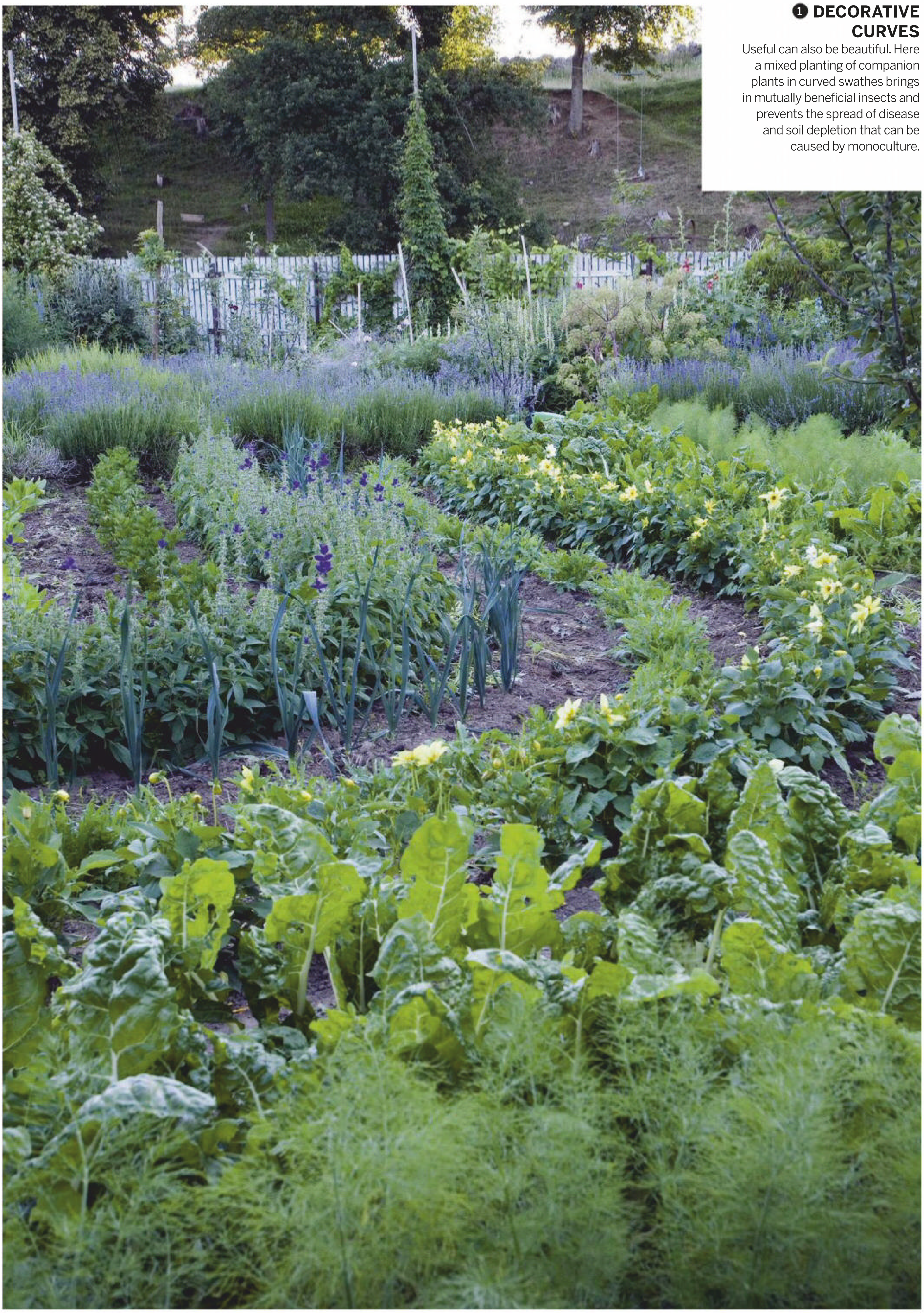




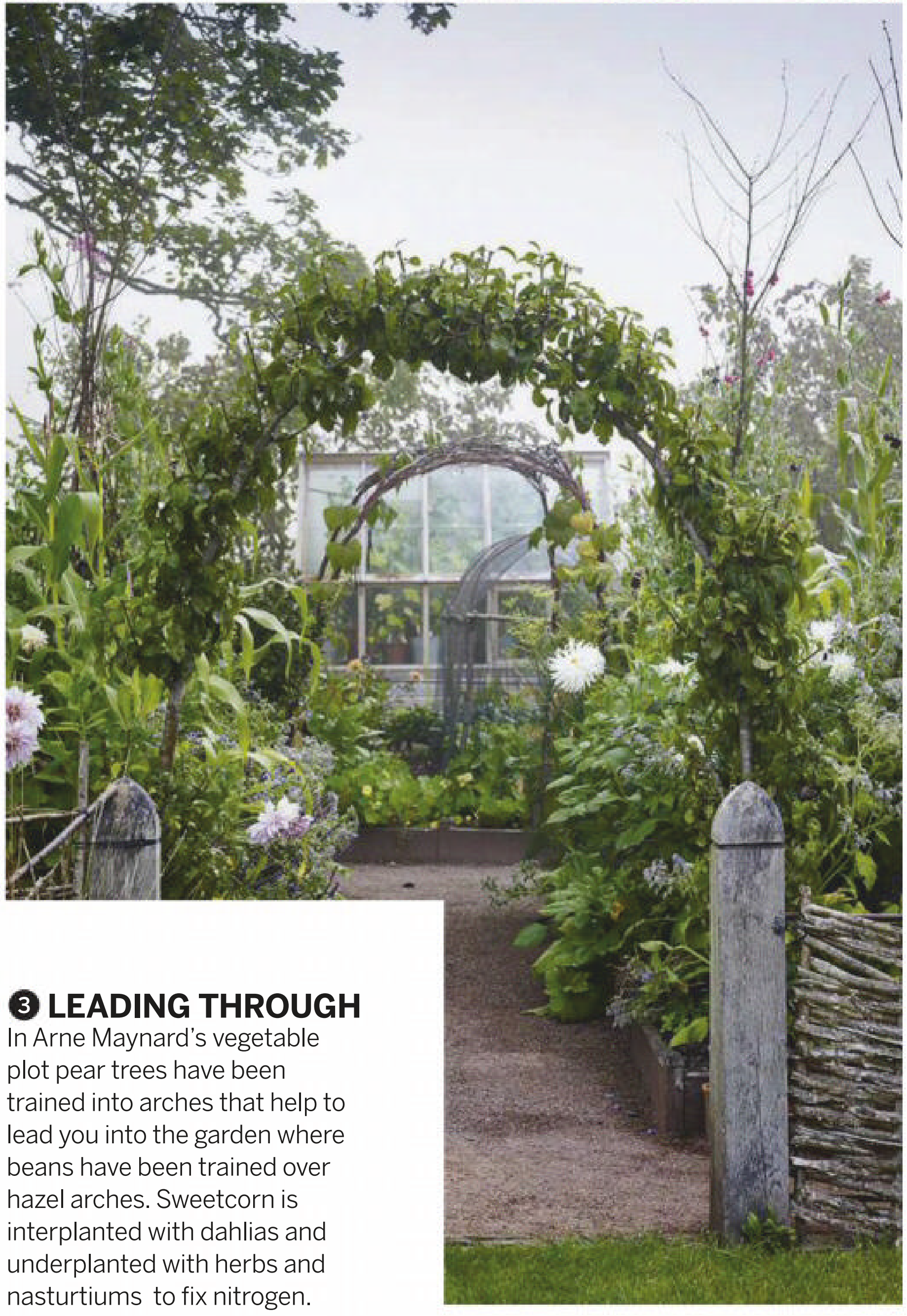
❶ DECORATIVE CURVES

Useful can also be beautiful. Here a mixed planting of companion plants in curved swathes brings in mutually beneficial insects and prevents the spread of disease and soil depletion that can be caused by monoculture.

1 THE GARDEN COLLECTION / FP / JANE SEBIRE

❷ NATURAL LAYERS

In this productive garden at Restoration House in Rochester, the different layers mimic the natural layout in nature. Trees and mid-size shrubs provide shelter and create a stable micro climate, while ground cover and herbaceous layers protect the soil.



❸ LEADING THROUGH

In Arne Maynard's vegetable plot pear trees have been trained into arches that help to lead you into the garden where beans have been trained over hazel arches. Sweetcorn is interplanted with dahlias and underplanted with herbs and nasturtiums to fix nitrogen.

Raised borders or paths help access and define areas. By not digging we protect the soil structure and the microbes below as well as saving our backs.

▷ trees provide dappled shade, sequester carbon and allow the roots to begin communicating between plants. Buy trees young and allow enough space between their mature canopies to allow sunlight to reach the plants below.

Raised borders or paths help access and define areas. By not digging we protect the soil structure and the microbes below as well as saving our backs. Groundcover keeps warmth and moisture in, excludes uninvited weeds and feeds the soil and the plants with essential minerals. Nitrogen fixers, such as clover or phacelia, can be dug in or mown over before setting seed and used as mulch to break down gradually. Planting in small sizes reduces cost and allows plants to establish their root systems early.

Shrubs provide the next layer and give shape and form. If your garden is near the sea then opt for an *Elaeagnus*, which will survive salty wind, fix nitrogen and give berries, while for gardens inland a *Cornus mas*, *Amelanchier* or shrub rose will offer blossom, berries or hips and fabulous autumn colour.

A favourite herbaceous layer combination is the Native American idea known as the three sisters, which combines sweetcorn, beans and squash. The beans climb up the corn stems as they grow, fixing nitrogen at the roots, and then the large squash leaves curl around the bases and keep other plants and weeds at bay.

Herbal helpers

Some herbs are very easy from seed, such as calendula, whose petals look beautiful in salads or frozen into ice cubes and which are said to have healing properties when used in an infusion, and can help to soothe skin when used in a massage oil. Others, such as lavender, are shrubs that can be placed under kitchen windows to keep flies away, be dried as a moth repellent to line your drawers or popped under your pillow to help you sleep. Rosemary beneath the washing line gives sheets that extra fresh smell and I like to keep digestive-aiding mint in pots to pick for tea on my way to the studio. We also allow comfrey to creep under the hedges for comfrey tea (a plant tonic) and always leave a patch of brambles for berries and to shelter birds, hedgehogs and dormice.

Water collected in a swale, water butt or a trough can also be enjoyed by swooping bats and birds, while a shallow bowl or a moss-covered stone is ideal to allow bees to drink.

And don't discount what nature provides without your intervention, such as a spontaneous blooming of lemon balm (good for alleviating stress) or nettles (used as a cleansing herb). Check in a good herbal guide before eating any plants you're not sure of, but if it's right for you, accept the gift.

Finally allow a patch of clover lawn to do some yoga, stretching and relaxing, as the most important tools to keep maintained are our own bodies. □

Marian Boswall is a multi-award-winning landscape architect with an international practice, MBLA, based in Kent. marianboswall.com

2 MARIAN BOSWALL; 3 JASON INGRAM

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Sylvia's gift has helped fund our work to conquer stroke. She's supported research to prevent and treat stroke, and she's helped care for survivors. And that's something you can do too – in the same way.

If you would like to learn more about remembering the Stroke Association in your Will, please get in touch.

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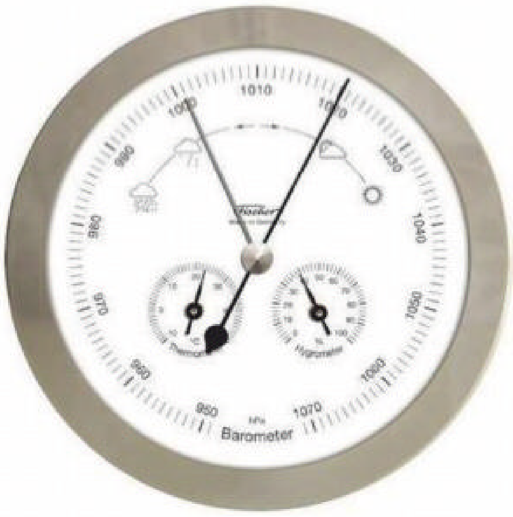

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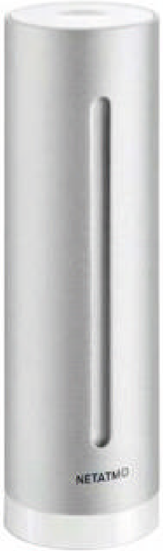

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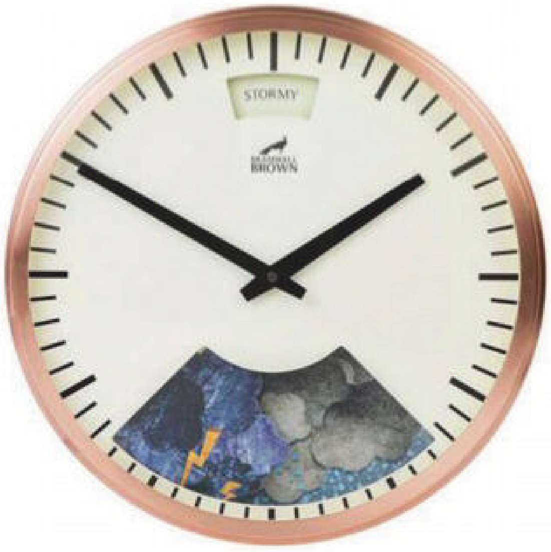

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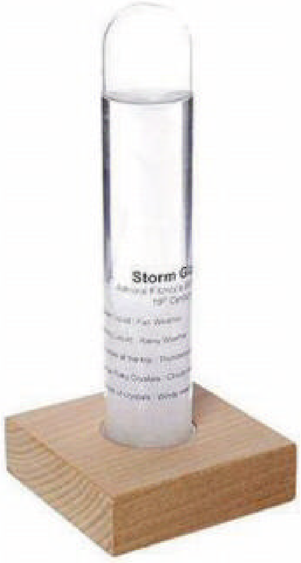

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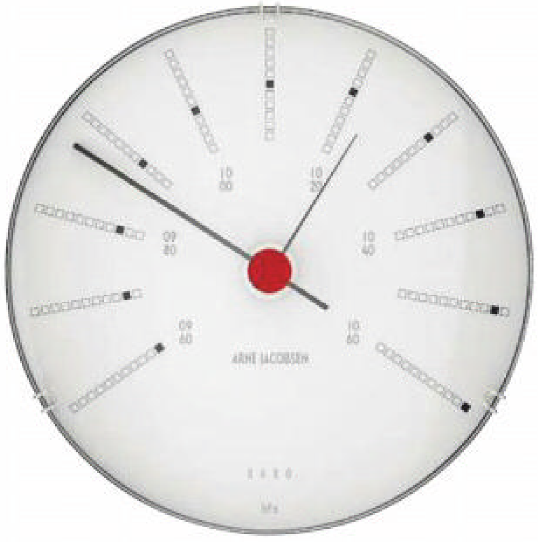

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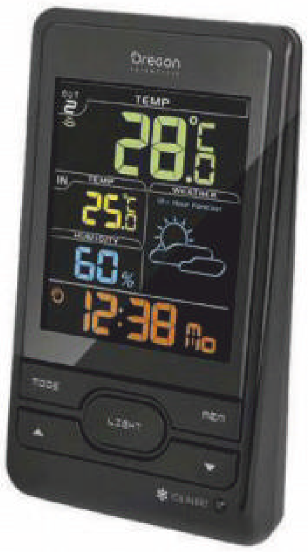

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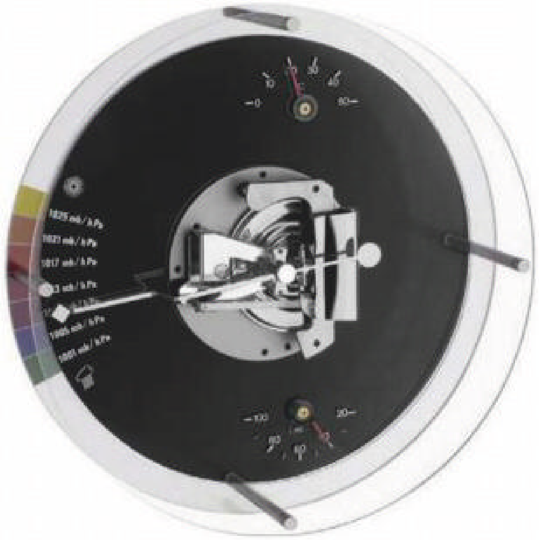

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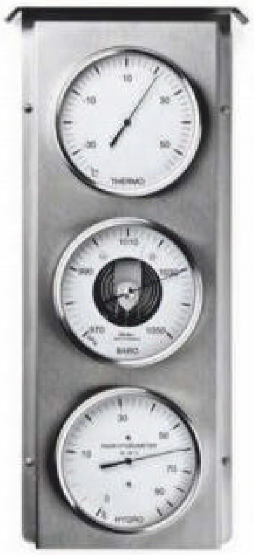

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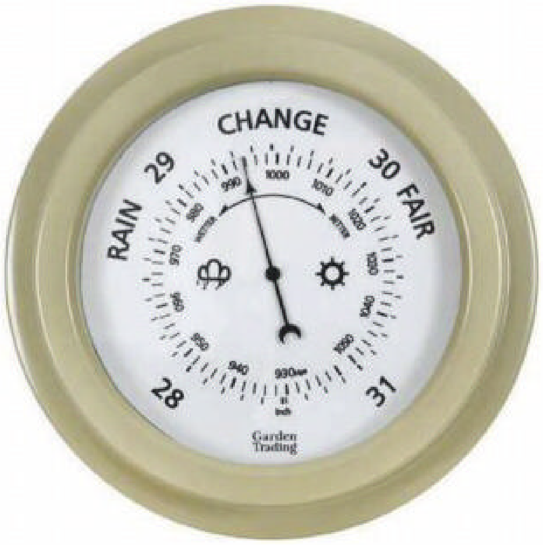

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Book reviews, back issues, crossword

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Distinctive New Zealand lancewoods, *Pseudopanax crassifolius*, tower over *Monarda* 'Gardenview Scarlet', *Filipendula purpurea* and *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Orange Field (= 'Orangofield') in Jimi Blake's Hunting Brook Gardens, the subject of *A Beautiful Obsession*, reviewed on page 107.

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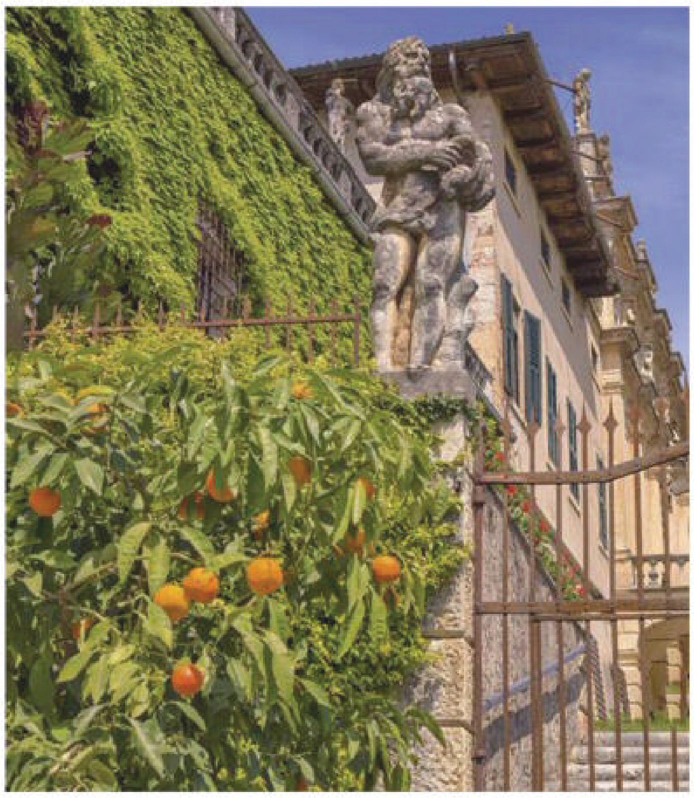

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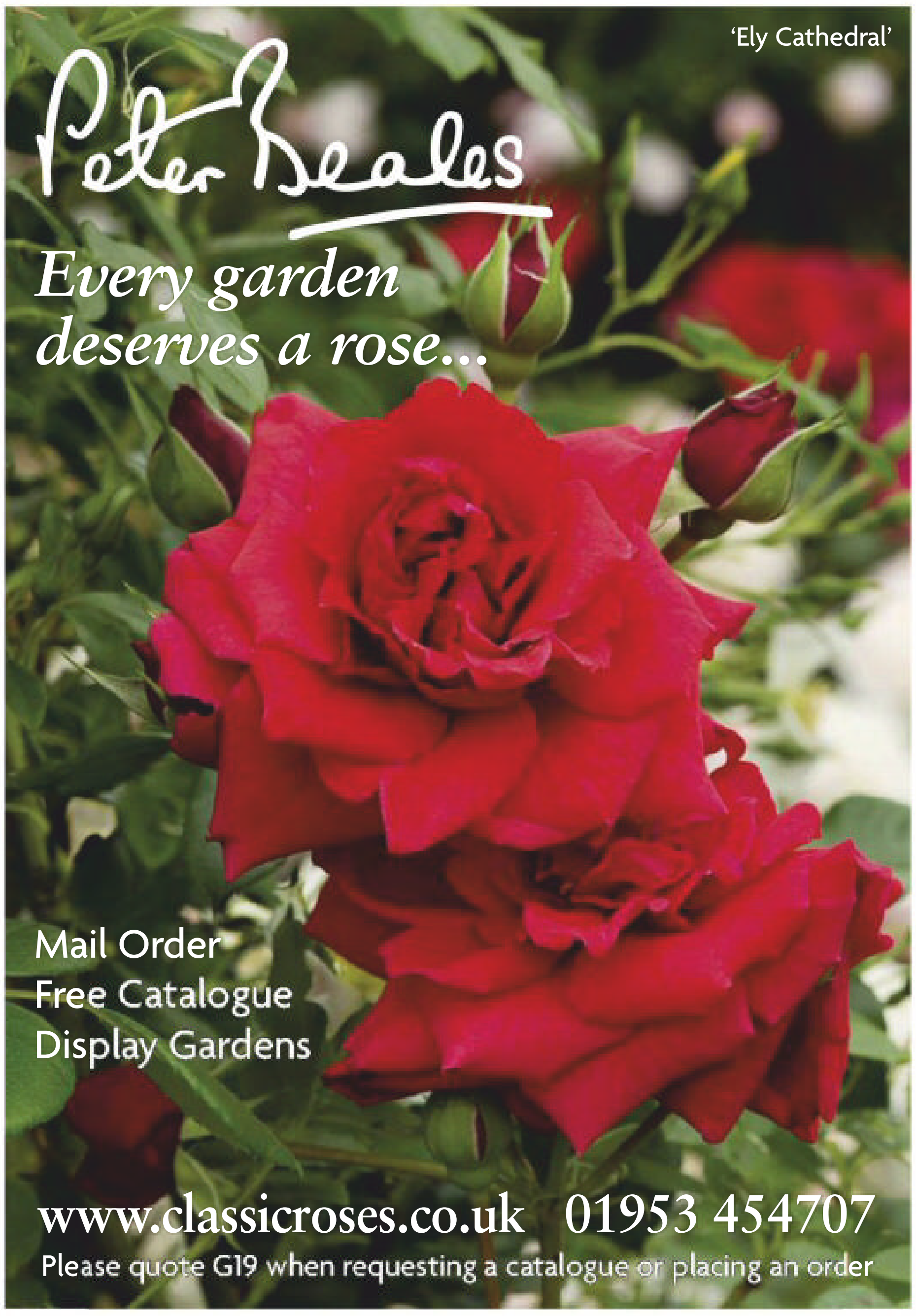

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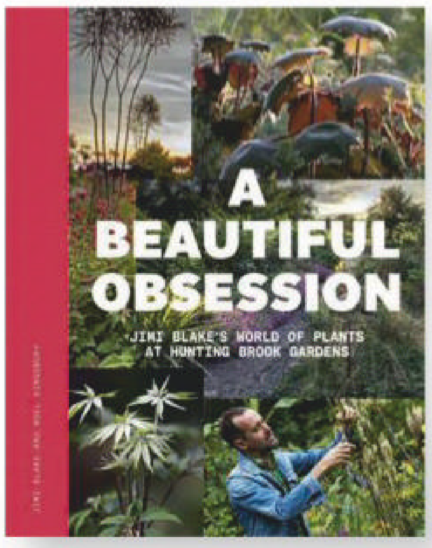


A BEAUTIFUL OBSESSION: JIMI BLAKE'S WORLD OF PLANTS AT HUNTING BROOK GARDENS

by Jimi Blake and
Noel Kingsbury

Filbert Press, £25
ISBN 978-1999734527

The story of one man's love affair with plants, this is a personal account of bold plant selection and creative gardening in a world that never stands still.

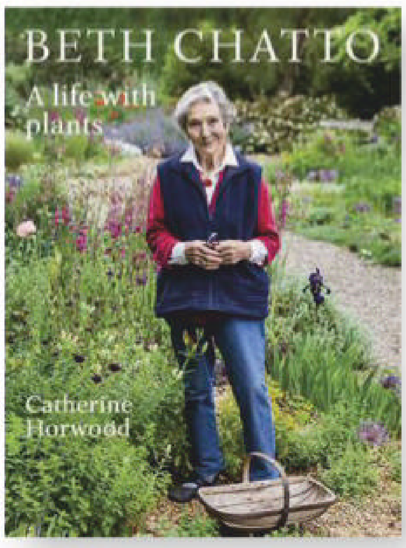
Reviewer Benjamin William Pope is head gardener at Trotton Place.

Most horticultural books fall into one of two categories: those full of technical information and those that are more sensitive, capturing the personal experiences individuals have with plants and gardens. In telling the story of plantsman Jimi Blake, this book does a little of both.

On opening the book, readers are greeted with confident colours surrounding illustrations of bold foliage and a 1970s' disco ball, a taste of what lies beyond. Co-written by Noel Kingsbury, the book begins by introducing you to Blake and his horticultural career, culminating in his return to the family farm to create Hunting Brook Gardens. The pages meander past sunny glades into shaded woodland valleys, detailing the development of the garden, plant choice and Blake's thoughts. Plant lists and observations on specific genera punctuate the text, in a somewhat unstructured fashion. Like listening to the musings of two gardeners as they take a stroll, you never quite know which direction the text will take. What is clear is Blake's unique personality and love for the unusual, and how his appreciation for life and everything in it drives his appetite to redevelop and experiment within the garden.

After touching on some maintenance detail, the book concludes with a directory of Blake's favourite nurseries, gardens and plants. An insight into the breadth and depth of his horticultural expertise, this is a great reference point for those wanting to explore further.

A book that will appeal to amateurs and professionals alike – an inspiration on striking plants and intuitive planting. Like the garden, it embodies the sentiment of poet John O'Donohue: 'I would love to live like a river flows, carried by the surprise of its own unfolding'.



BETH CHATTO – A LIFE WITH PLANTS

by Catherine Horwood

Pimpernel Press, £30
ISBN 978-1910258828

An intriguing insight into the personal life of one of the greatest gardeners of our time, this book is a fascinating, open and honest read.

Reviewer Fergus Garrett is head gardener at Great Dixter.

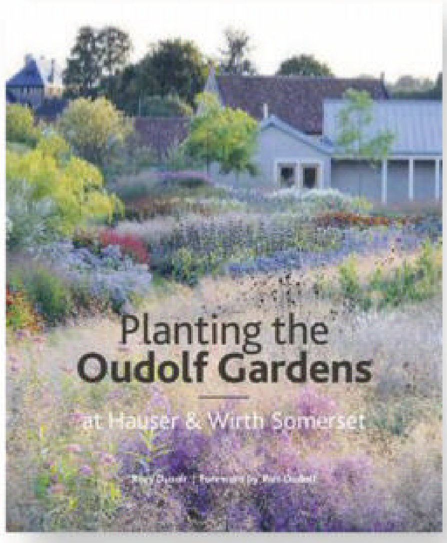
The late Beth Chatto has long been a part of gardeners' lives; she changed the way we think and look, and left a huge footprint on the horticultural world. In her books, lectures and interviews, Beth was extraordinarily open about her life, her influences, and the challenges she faced. Her *Garden Notebook* (published in 1988) and the exchange of letters between her and Christopher Lloyd in *Dear Friend and Gardener* (1998) have already given us an insight into her personal world, so could a biography add anything more? A book like this could so easily disappoint – especially if the biographer hasn't dug deep.

Catherine Horwood's book is, however, a triumph, beautifully crafted by an author who has thoroughly researched and understood her subject. She has concentrated on Beth Chatto the person, reading 30 years' worth of her private diaries, and interviewing dozens of her friends, colleagues and family. From start to finish, this publication gives us a real understanding of Beth's life.

The author paints a vivid picture, from Beth's humble beginnings as a village constable's daughter, gardening alongside her mother Bessie, to her romance with Andrew Chatto and their ensuing marriage, followed by family life with her daughters Mary and Diana, to her involvement with flower arranging, to her meeting with influential artist and iris breeder Sir Cedric Morris, to success and recognition, through to the final years. Beth's drive and determination is clear from the start.

The text is well supported with black-and-white photographs from the family's private collection, paintings and sketches by Andrew Chatto, as well as pages from Beth's notebook. There is so much here to keep the reader gripped.

BOOK REVIEWS



PLANTING THE OUDOLF GARDENS AT HAUSER & WIRTH SOMERSET

by Rory Dusoir

Filbert Press, £30
ISBN 978-1999734534

A beautifully illustrated and insightful account of the creation and planting of Piet Oudolf's gardens at Hauser & Wirth Somerset.

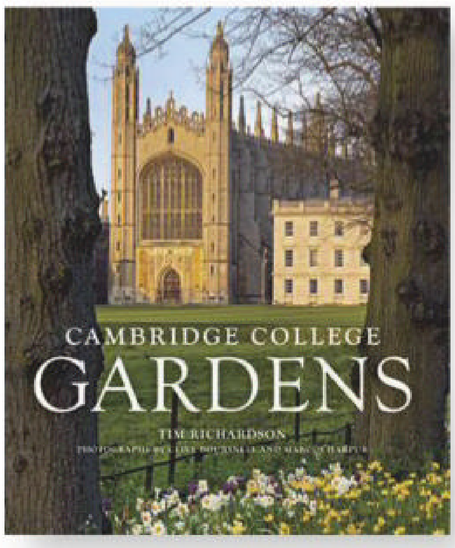
Reviewer Annie Gatti is a garden writer.

Dutch landscape designer Piet Oudolf was given free rein to create the gardens at the farm buildings that have been transformed into an international gallery and arts centre near Bruton in Somerset. His designs start at the entrance with productive beds and a grasses border. In the awkwardly shaped courtyard between galleries is a shady cloister garden, a lesson in restraint and textures. At the back of the buildings is a 1.5-acre former field, where Oudolf celebrates the beauty of herbaceous plants in all stages of growth with a combination of meadow-like planting, blocks of perennials and tall, foliage-rich plants.

It is this field that is the main focus of this book, which sets Oudolf's particular style of naturalistic planting in context and deftly and engagingly describes the design process, the selection of plants, the laying out and planting, and the ongoing maintenance and editing required by head gardener Mark Dumbleton.

Author Rory Dusoir carries the reader through each season, with explanations of the changes in effects from this highly complex orchestration of plants that must hold visitors' interest throughout the year. With just three evergreen grasses and no clipped forms – the only trees here have uncompromisingly stark outlines – the garden relies on the tones, textures and forms of the herbaceous planting to create winter interest.

It is thanks to Jason Ingram's arresting images that readers can visualise just how beautiful these combinations of seedheads and grasses can be, planted en masse and rimed in frost or glistening in the sun. The Plant Directory section, which also features Ingram's photographs, will entice gardeners to try at least some of these hard-working plants in their own spaces.



CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE GARDENS

by Tim Richardson, photography by Clive Boursnell and Marcus Harper

White Lion Publishing, £40
ISBN 978-0711238510

A handsomely illustrated and highly readable survey of Cambridge's college gardens that will delight both alumni and those who know the city.

Reviewer Ambra Edwards is a writer and garden historian.

Exploring the rich horticultural diversity of 27 Cambridge colleges, this companion volume to Richardson's *Oxford College Gardens* is also a tribute to the late garden photographer Marcus Harper, who took many of the images. Clive Boursnell, who completed the book, has captured not only the serene cloistered quads, stately avenues and misty watermeadows we associate with Cambridge, but also more surprising spaces – hidden orchards, rooftop gardens, a sleek oriental garden dedicated to a Chinese poet.

The text is authoritative, pithy and opinionated, drawing on a vast range of sources from college account books, to a Latin ode, to a letter from the philosopher Wittgenstein denouncing a dahlia bed as being 'like a gaudy birthday cake'. The introduction, setting the development of the gardens in their historical context, is particularly illuminating.

Richardson is adept at capturing 'the intensely solemn loveliness that we associate with the older colleges of Cambridge'. But he also flies the flag for more recently established colleges, bolder in both architecture and horticulture. He praises the 'diaphanous, colourful, unstructured' planting of Murray Edwards College, and finds Trinity Hall's new Wychfield site, conceived as a 'garden community,' entirely the equal of the older college garden.

As at Oxford, the decision by various colleges to contract out their gardening is imperiling the university's great horticultural traditions. Happily, there remains at Cambridge a solid core of talented, innovative and dedicated head gardeners, and Richardson very rightly gives them their due in an engaging sequence of portraits of the gardening teams. This book offers ample testimony to their skill.

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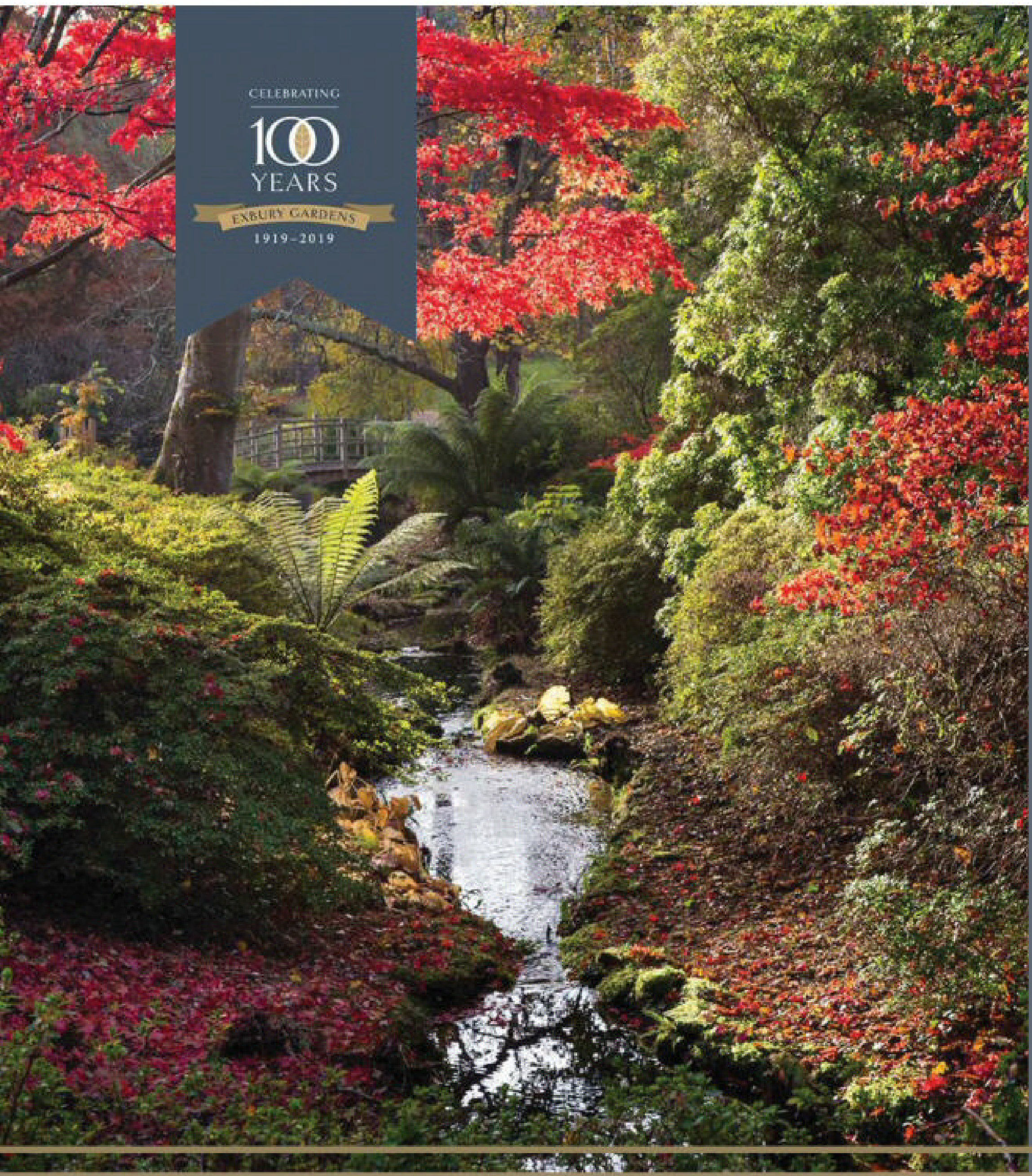
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BOOK REVIEWS

Kew
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KEW GARDENER'S COMPANION GUIDES

GROWING BULBS
by Richard Wilford
ISBN 978-0711239340

GROWING FRUIT
by Kay Maguire
ISBN 978-0711239371

Two gems from a new series of books from Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, on key gardening subjects, are perfect for getting beginners hooked.

Reviewer Alys Fowler is a writer and horticulturist.

Growing Bulbs by Richard Wilford is worth the cover price for the first three pages alone – a perfect introduction to the difference between true bulbs, corms, tubers and rhizomes, and how these subtle physiological variances inform how you grow and care for this group of plants. The book continues to unfurl like a new crocus in spring. There is a good discussion of how to use bulbs in the garden for year-round interest, how to order your bulbs (a nuanced subject if you want the best of a stored organ) and a light, but well-informed section detailing simple propagation techniques.

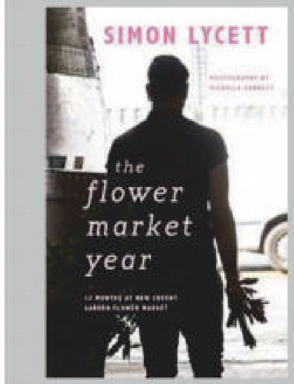
The rest of the book is a compendium of the best of this group of plants. This covers everything from the obvious tulips and ornamental onion to more unusual subjects such as the Chinese lily *Nomocharis*, or the firecracker flower *Dichelostemma ida-maia*. For each plant, there is a description of where and how to grow, plus details such as good companion plants, and essential growing tips such as responses to competition or windy conditions. For larger groups, such as tulips, daffodils and alliums, there is more of an overview of the group with notable species and cultivars. Scattered throughout the book are projects, be they planting ornamental onions in an herbaceous border, planting up pots for indoors, creating a cut-flower bed or naturalising bulbs in the garden. Again, these are clear, informative introductions to the subject.

Growing Fruit by Kay Maguire is part of the same series, and runs along similar lines, covering everything from apples to pomegranates and nuts with plenty of projects on preservation to creating a family tree.

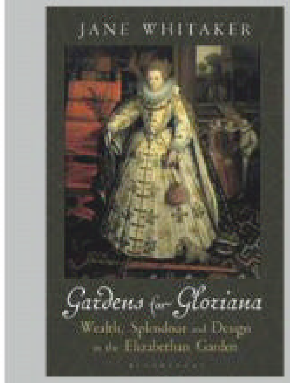
Both books are gems, and are attractively laid out so that they will make perfect presents.

Other books

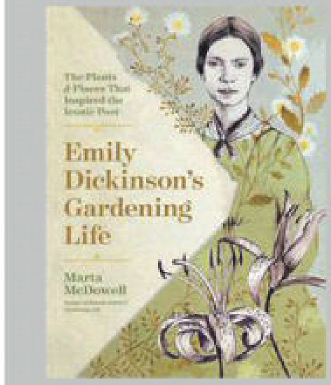
This month's includes insights into one man's life as a florist, a writer's relationship with nature and a poet's passion for plants.



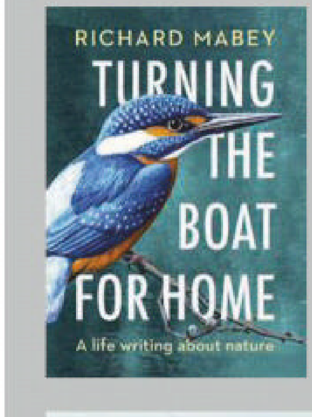
THE FLOWER MARKET YEAR
by Simon Lycett
Simon J Lycett Ltd, £30
ISBN 978-1916091207
A year as seen through florist Simon Lycett's regular visits to Covent Garden Market, highlighting seasonal blooms along with step-by-step projects.



GARDENS FOR GLORIANA
by Jane Whitaker
Bloomsbury, £20
ISBN 978-1788311199
An account of England's finest Elizabethan gardens – symbols of power and courtly magnificence, conveying a sense of cultured worldliness.



EMILY DICKINSON'S GARDENING LIFE
by Marta McDowell
Timber Press, £18.99
ISBN 978-1604698220
Well-loved as a literary figure, Emily Dickinson was also an avid gardener, her passion for plants explored in this insightful book.



TURNING THE BOAT FOR HOME
by Richard Mabey
Chatto & Windus, £18.99
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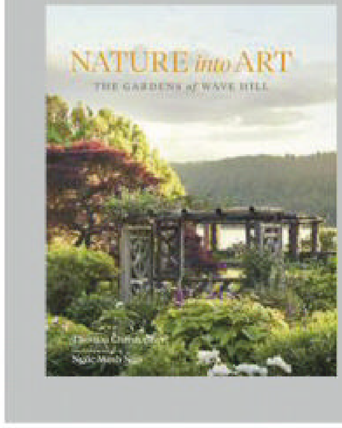

NATURE INTO ART
by Thomas Christopher
Timber Press, £30
ISBN 978-1604698510
Wave Hill is one of the USA's most notable public gardens, located in the Bronx. This book explores its continuing horticultural craftsmanship.

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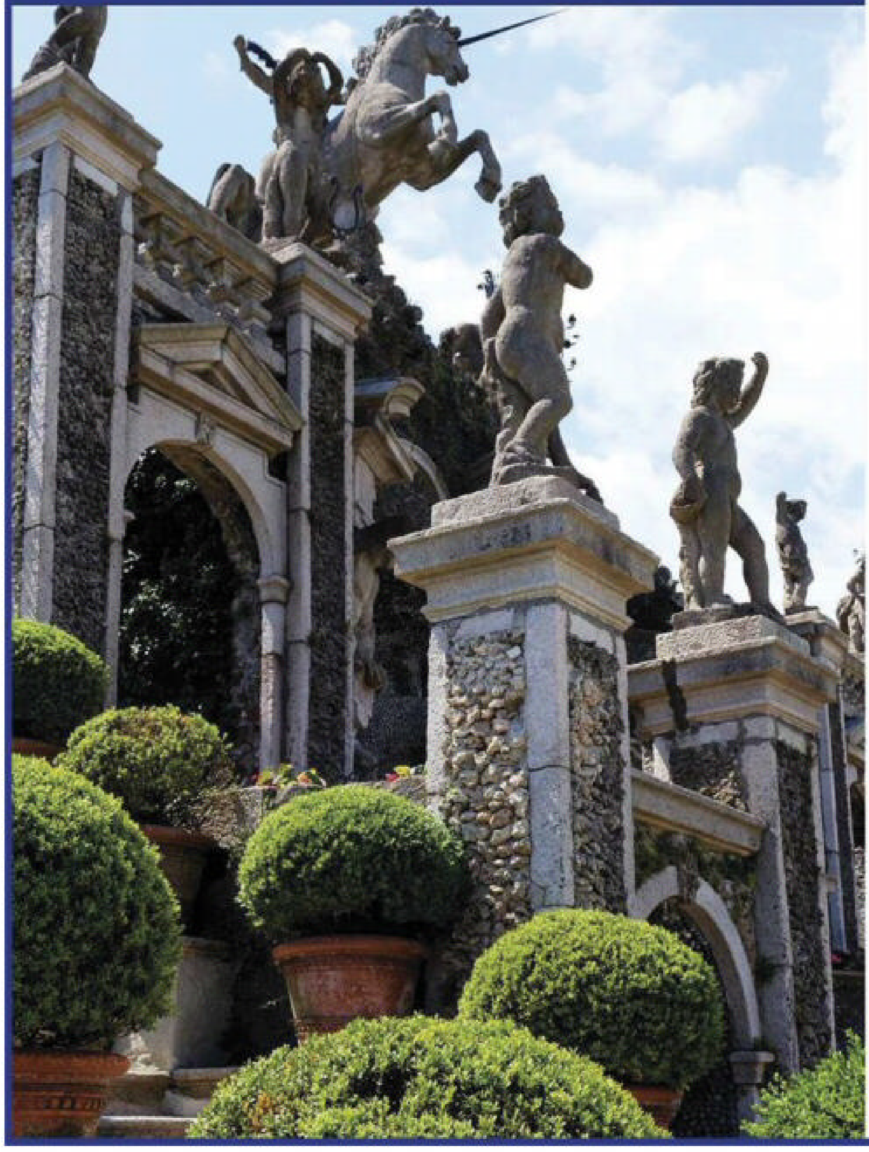

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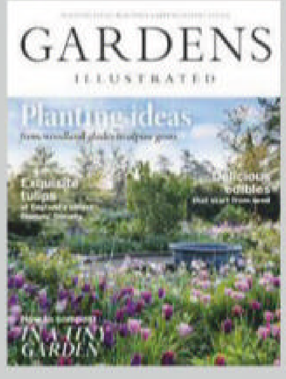

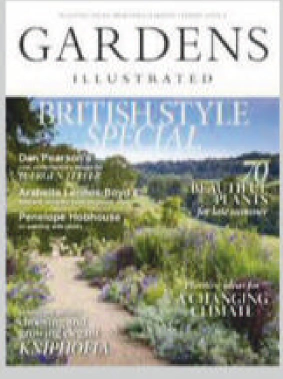

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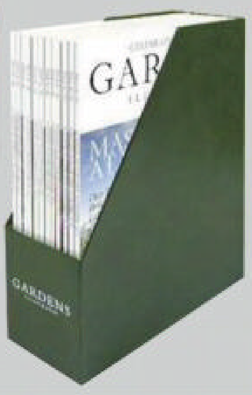

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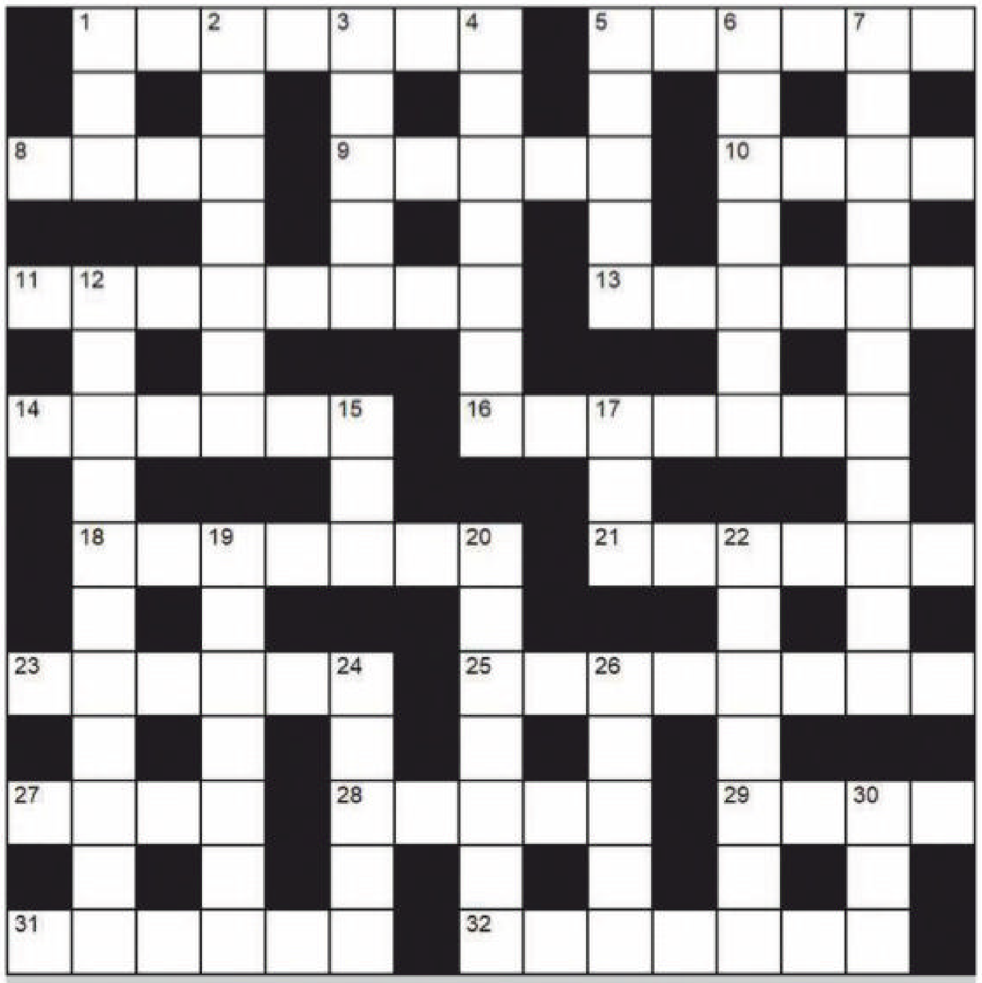
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Genus of African marigolds (7)
5 Marrow-like vegetable – makes a cordial drink (6)
8 An orange-flowered *Hedychium* (ginger lily) – in August a rarity (4)
9 A Florence fennel cultivar, 'Spanish Friend' (5)
10 See 28 across
11 A tulip species from Asia – in casual disarray (8)
13 Small gardening tool – right inside drying cloth (6)
14 A calla lily with purple-black flowers named after a Ukrainian seaport (6)
16 Cherry tree named after 18th-19th-century Japanese artist (7)
18 Genus of palm grass and bristle grass – I rate as unusual (7)
21 Chap mashed rue for a natural soil-enricher (6)
23 Appropriately named upright, stiff Lisbon onion – or dram, perhaps (6)
25 Vegetable with edible, knobbly, turnip-like stem base (8)
27 A bright-red astilbe… in Vietnam? (4)
28/10 Circular fungal infection of grass, according to folklore (5,4)
29 How a finger might feel if pricked… by rambling rose? (4)
31 Part of flower's corolla – palest sort (6)
32 Common name of *Daphne cneorum* is _____ flower – Judy? (7)

DOWN

1 Drink made from *Camellia sinensis* leaves (3)
2 Police informers revealing plants like *Hakonechloa macra* (7)
3 A lacecap hydrangea with purplish autumn foliage – could go to one's head (5)
4 Nutritious leaf vegetable (7)
5 Plant resulting from genetic mutation… in genus *Portulaca* (5)
6 Pulls plant from the soil (7)
7 Genus of mother-in-law's tongue, as ever is in a mess (11)
12 Its name is *Alchemilla mollis* – 'Woman's Cloak' (5,6)
15 It's essential to plant growth in bonsai re-potting (3)
17 A series of dwarf, colourful antirrhinum… initially kept in mulch (3)
19 Term meaning cluster of three leaflets – as in *Choisya* _____ (7)
20 Habit of eg *Kolkwitzia* shrubs (7)
22 Some gardener is saving a hybrid double-flowering snowdrop (7)
24 In short, they're plants of the *Narcissus* genus (5)
26 Bend a shoot to the earth to root (5)
30 Another name for a grape cordon (3)

Solutions to this month's crossword will be printed next month

SOLUTIONS TO SEPTEMBER'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Empress **5** Cerise **9** Glut **10** Piper **11** Stop **12** Cardoon **14** Azalea **15** Beesia **17** Spectrum **19** Bluebird **21** Gurkha **22** Onions **24** Gunnera **26** Kiwi **27** Cress **28** Pips **29** Vernus **30** Oak tree.

DOWN: 2 Malic **3** Rot **4** Sophora **5** Cordate **6** Rosea **7** Smoke bush **8** Spanish dagger **13** Rosie **16** Eglantine **18** Three **20** Insects **21** Genista **23** Orion **25** Apple **28** Pit.

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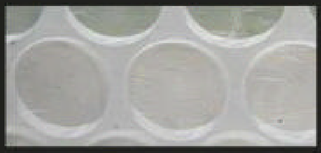

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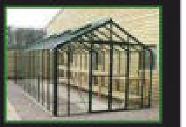

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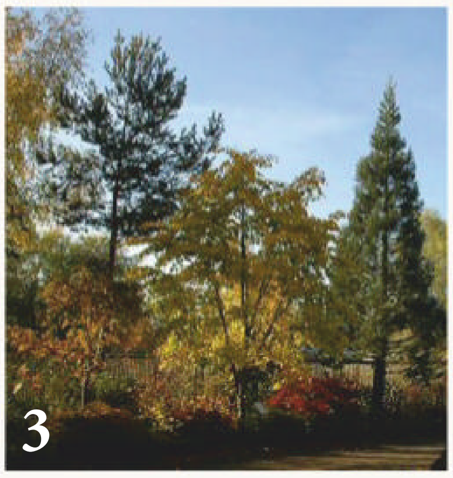
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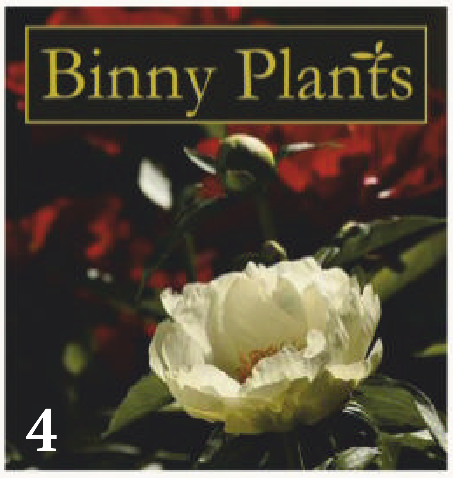

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meadowgatenursery.co.uk | 07736 523262

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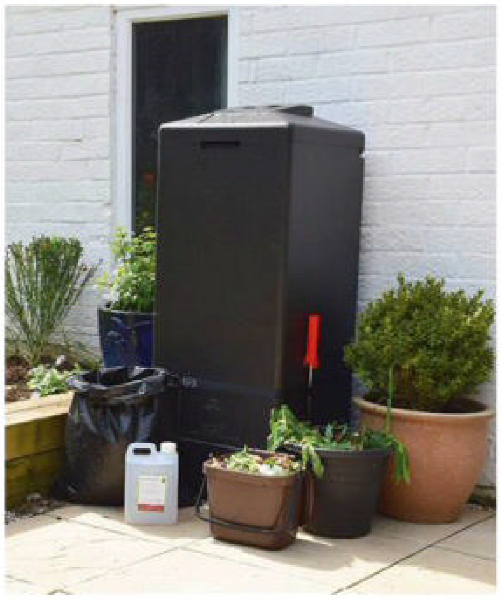

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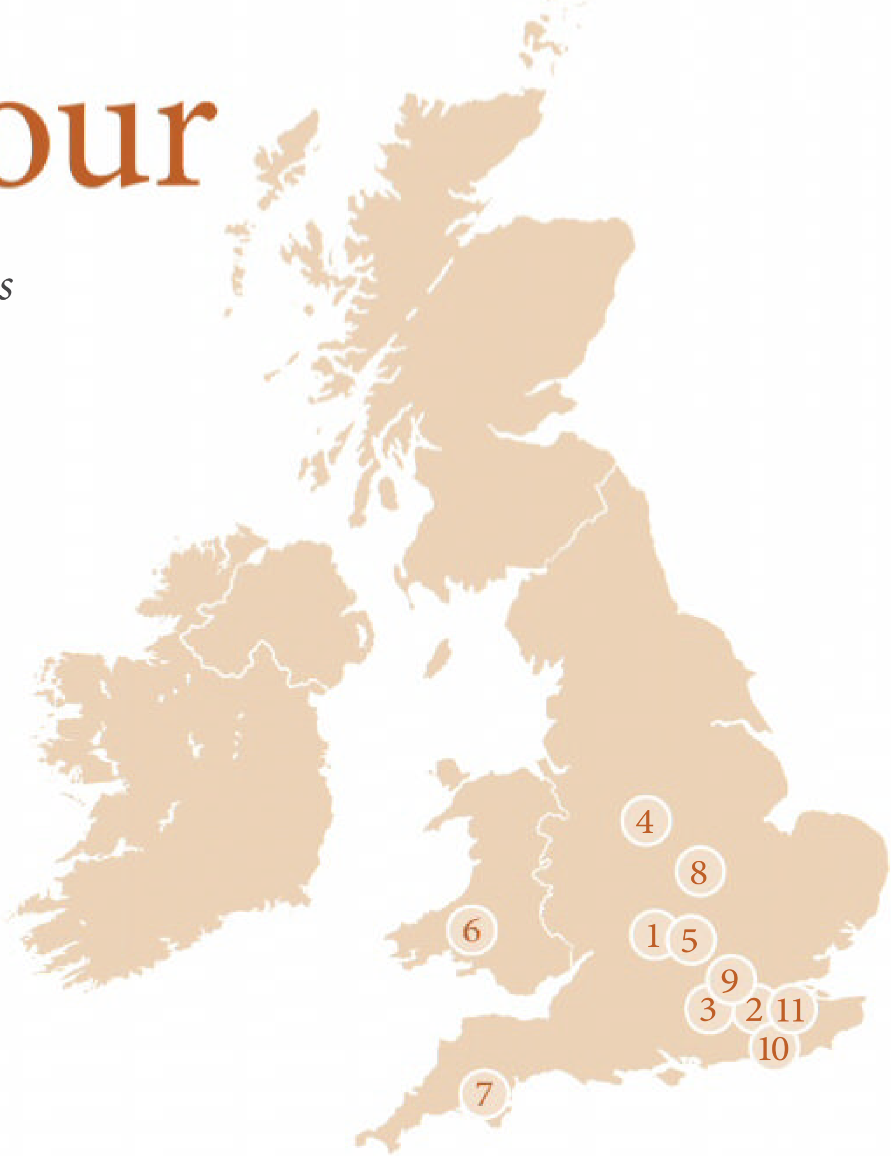
Autumn in colour

Autumn is a great time to visit this collection of stunning gardens



1 WATERPERRY GARDENS

Enjoy a visit to Waterperry's Ornamental Gardens, see our famous herbaceous border take centre stage when the Michaelmas daisies create a late flourish, and the beautiful autumn colours lead us into walks along the riverside. A place to explore, relax and shop in beautiful surroundings all year round.

Near Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1LA | 01844 339226 | waterperrygardens.co.uk

2 CHARTWELL

Once used to grow the produce that fed Winston Churchill and his family, you can now see root vegetables in the Walled Garden harvested for dishes in the Landemare café. You can't miss the pumpkins and squash suspended from the ground or the apple trees bearing fruit in the Orchard.

Westerham, Kent TN16 1PS | 01732 868381 | nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell

3 EMMETTS GARDEN

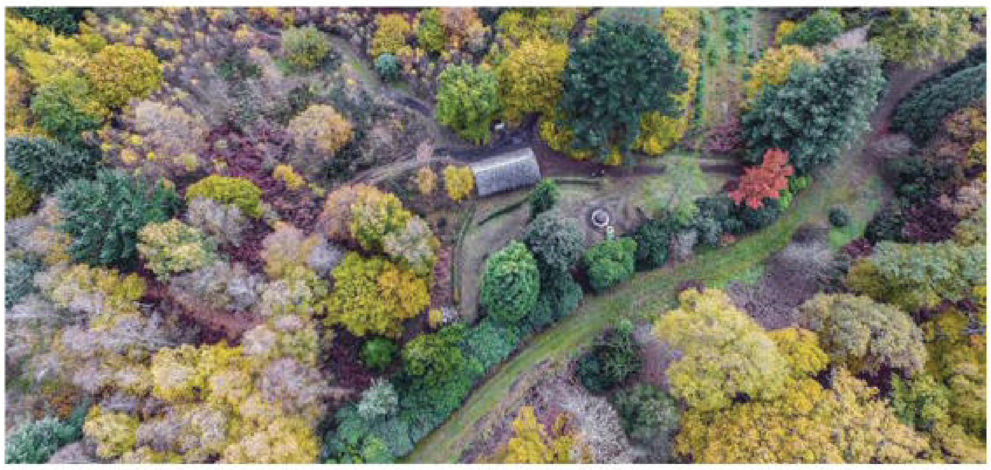
This Edwardian hillside garden of specimen trees and shrubs is a cacophony of colour in autumn. From the vivid dark red of the *Rhododendron* 'Whitethroat', the blends of green, red and yellow from the *Nyssa sinensis* to the toffee apple scent of the Katsura tree; this horticultural haven comes to life this season.

Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6BA | 01732 868381 | nationaltrust.org.uk/emmetts-garden

4 BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Visit our tranquil nine-acre woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb autumn colour! Many of the rarities on display are available for sale from our adjoining specialist plant nursery. RHS Partner Garden.

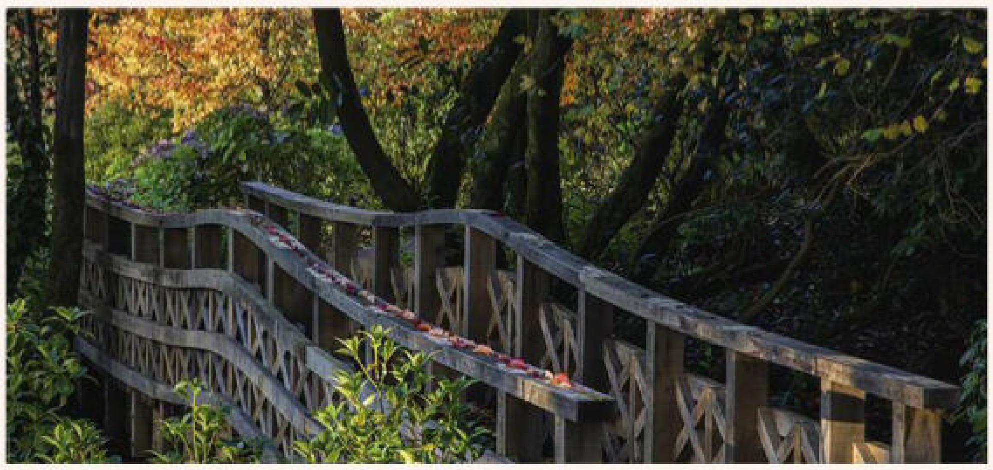
Smisby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com



5 HARCOURT ARBORETUM

The University of Oxford Harcourt Arboretum contains some of the finest conifer collections in the UK. Highlights include the Acer Glade and the Threatened Tree Trail where visitors can discover more about some of the world's most endangered trees, featuring some of the UK's oldest redwoods.

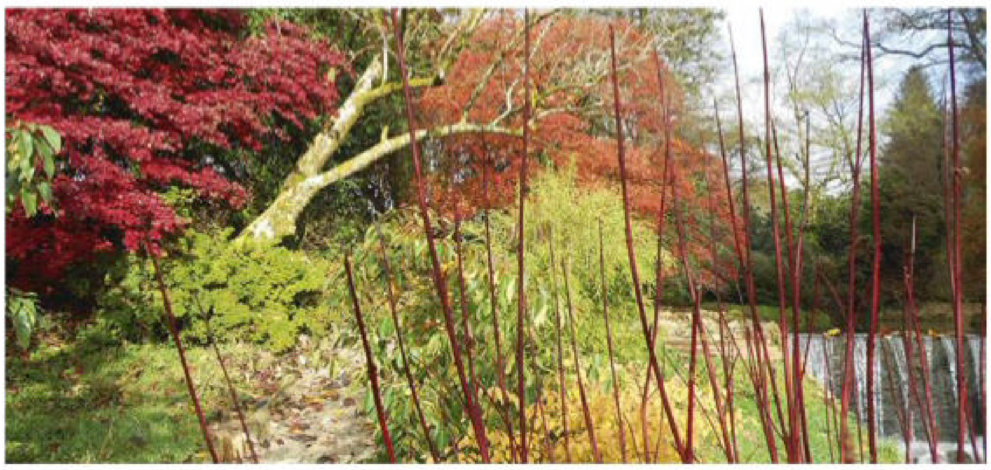
Nuneham Courtenay OX44 9PX | 01865 610 305 | admin@obg.ox.ac.uk



6 ABERGLASNEY GARDENS

Aberglasney was made famous by the BBC television series *A Garden Lost in Time* which followed its restoration. This renowned plantsman's paradise puts on quite a display in autumn when a huge number of trees form a spectacular backdrop for some really good plants and bulbs coming into flower.

Llangathen, Carmarthenshire SA32 8QH | 01558 668998 | aberglasney.org



7 LUKESLAND GARDENS

Family-run Lukesland Gardens on Dartmoor opens its 25 acres of glorious autumn colour on Sundays and Wednesdays 6 October 7 November 2019. Wonderful reflections of autumn tints in the pools of the Addicombe Brook. Home-made soup and cakes in the tearoom.

Harford, Ivybridge, South Devon PL21 0JF | 01752 691 749 | lukesland.co.uk

8 LAMPORT HALL & GARDENS

With 250 striking rows of perennials, planted to reflect the vegetables once grown here, the scale of unusual plants is breathtaking. Many were sourced from Piet Oudolf's nursery in the Netherlands and now provide a haven for bees and butterflies. It is at its best in the autumn.

Lamport, Northamptonshire NN6 9HD | 01604 686272 | lamporthall.co.uk

9 OSTERLEY PARK AND HOUSE

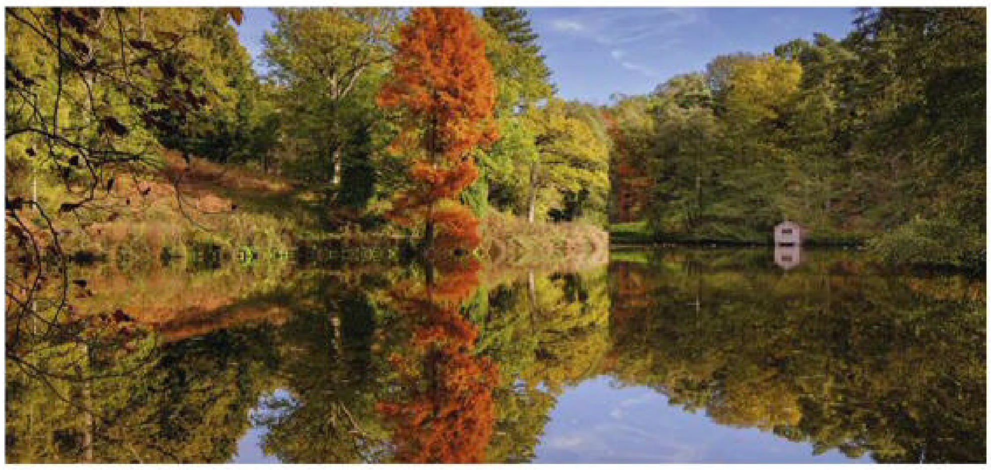
Osterley Park and House is one of the last surviving country estates in London, with the restored 18th-century gardens taking on their glorious autumnal hues. Don't miss the vibrant colours of the ornamental vegetable garden, set within the beautiful Tudor walled garden.

Isleworth, London TW7 4RB | 020 8232 5050 | nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley

10 HEVER CASTLE AND GARDENS

Autumn is the season when Hever's striking trees come to the fore. Colour abounds with vivid maples and brilliant beech. Boston ivy scrambles up the Castle walls while *Vitis coignetiae* clothe bridges and pergolas with crimson. Visit on a still day for the very best views of reflections in the moats and lake.

Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG | 01732 865224 | hevercastle.co.uk



11 WAKEHURST

Kew's wild botanic garden in Sussex are internationally significant for collections, scientific research and conservation. Especially beautiful in autumn, see vivid hues of red, orange and golds. Home to Kew's unique Millennium Seed Bank, where science and horticulture work side by side.

Haywards Heath, Sussex RH17 6TN | 01444 894066 | kew.org/wakehurst

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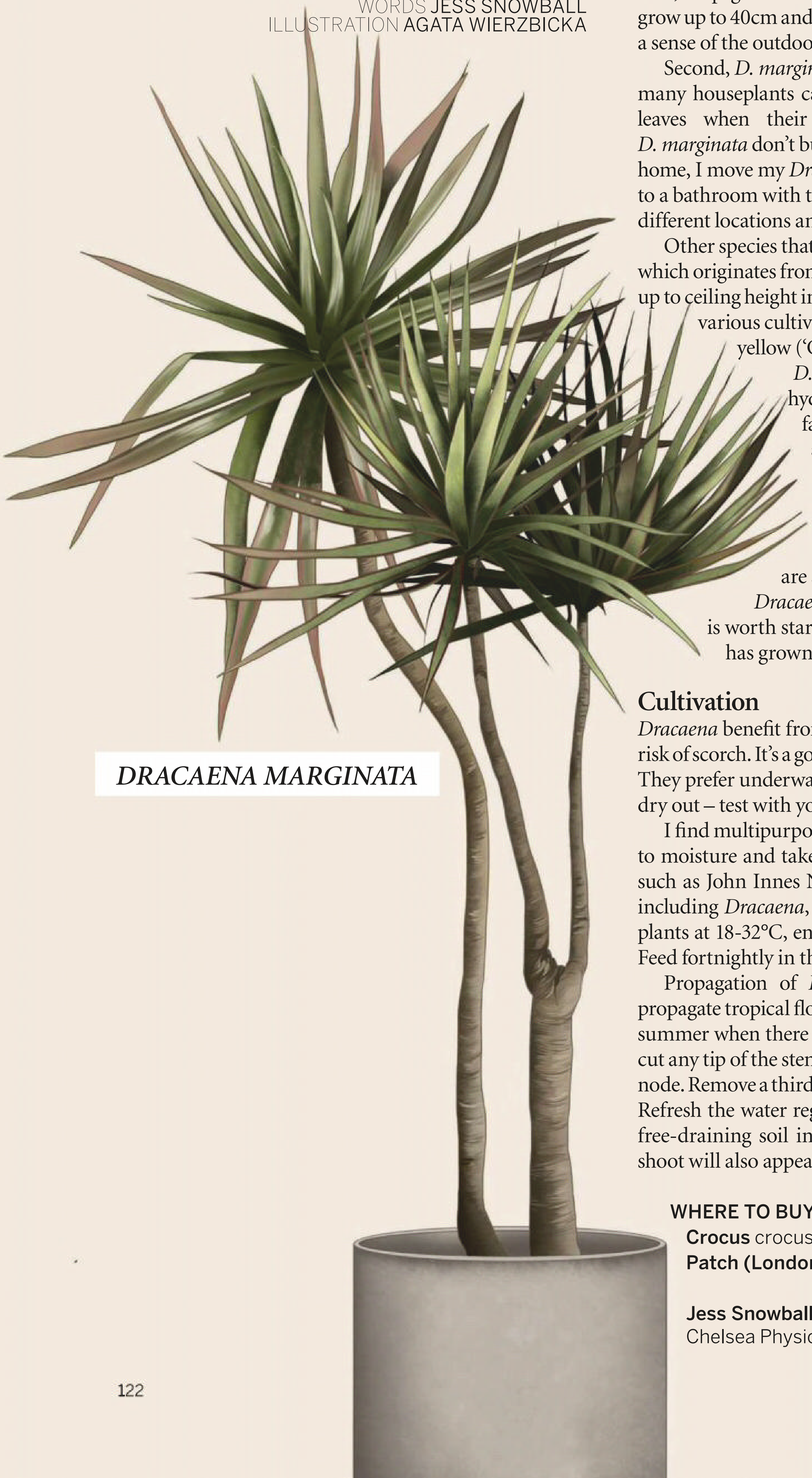
HOUSEPLANTS

The Great Indoors

Suitable for tight spots and easy to propagate, the slender, elegant dragon plant is an ideal houseplant for beginners

WORDS **JESS SNOWBALL**
ILLUSTRATION **AGATA WIERZBICKA**



DRACAENA MARGINATA

Dracaena, the dragon plant, sits in the asparagus family, Asparagaceae. The genus comprises around 189 species mainly from tropical and subtropical African regions, with exceptions from Madagascar, Asia, northern Australia and parts of South America. *Dracaena* has strappy foliage and, unusually for a strap-leafed plant, elegant, woody stems that vary in size, which makes it particularly suitable for tight spots. If anyone asks me for advice on choosing a houseplant, I tend to point them towards the *Dracaena* genus, and in particular *Dracaena marginata*. It is a fantastic beginner plant for several reasons.

First, it manages to fill a narrower spaces by staying incredibly slim. The stem is slender and graceful as it grows up and is complemented by a canopy of long, thin, deep-green leaves. An evergreen, tropical shrub, the ribbon-like foliage can grow up to 40cm and has a reddish tinge to the margins. It nimbly grows, creating a sense of the outdoors in a restricted indoor space.

Second, *D. marginata* stays green. This might seem like an obvious point, but many houseplants can be frustratingly fussy and turn chlorotic or drop their leaves when their specific requirements are not met. The leaves of *D. marginata* don't budge, with the exception of the odd lower leaf as it grows. At home, I move my *Dracaena* around frequently. From a south-facing living room to a bathroom with the smallest window and very little light, it is happy in many different locations and varying light sources.

Other species that are good as houseplants include *D. fragrans*, the corn plant, which originates from tropical Africa. It has thick stems and leaves, and will grow up to ceiling height indoors if given enough light and watered correctly. There are various cultivars with different stripes down the centre of the leaf, usually yellow ('Golden Coast') or white ('White Stripe').

D. sanderiana, known as the lucky bamboo, can be grown hydroponically or in pots. Its common name derives from the fact that it looks similar to bamboo, but has a greener stem and short, narrow leaf blades. It's short lived in water (a few weeks if the water is regularly changed), but better planted in a pot if kept long-term. Planted in soil, it prefers a free-draining medium that holds on to moisture well. Use rainwater or distilled water for watering as dragon plants are susceptible to fluoride toxicity from hard tap water.

Dracaena are slow-growing, so if you want to make a statement, it is worth starting with a larger, more established plant. My *D. marginata* has grown just 30cm in three years.

Cultivation

Dracaena benefit from bright, indirect light. If given too much sun, leaves are at risk of scorch. It's a good idea to grow them in a bathroom or kitchen for humidity. They prefer underwatering to overwatering, so let the top few centimetres of soil dry out – test with your finger – before watering again.

I find multipurpose compost unsuitable for indoor plants. It's heavy, holds on to moisture and takes some time to dry out. A free-draining potting compost, such as John Innes No.2 with added grit, is better suited to most houseplants, including *Dracaena*, provided you keep an eye on it and water when dry. Keep plants at 18-32°C, ensuring the temperature doesn't drop below 15°C in winter. Feed fortnightly in the summer using a balanced liquid feed at half strength.

Propagation of *Dracaena* is straightforward, via tip cuttings. You can propagate tropical flora all year round, but the success rate is higher in spring and summer when there is more light and heat. If your plant has multiple branches, cut any tip of the stem away from the parent plant, roughly 8cm long and above a node. Remove a third of the lower leaves and place in a jar of water on a windowsill. Refresh the water regularly and in a few weeks roots will appear. Pot on into a free-draining soil in a pot that comfortably accommodates the roots. A new shoot will also appear on the parent plant where the cutting has been taken. □

WHERE TO BUY – ONLINE SUPPLIERS
Crocus crocus.co.uk
Patch (London area only) patchplants.com

Jess Snowball is glasshouse manager at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London.

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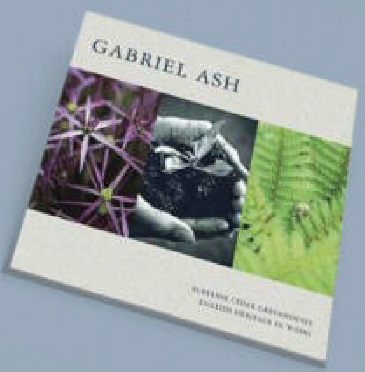

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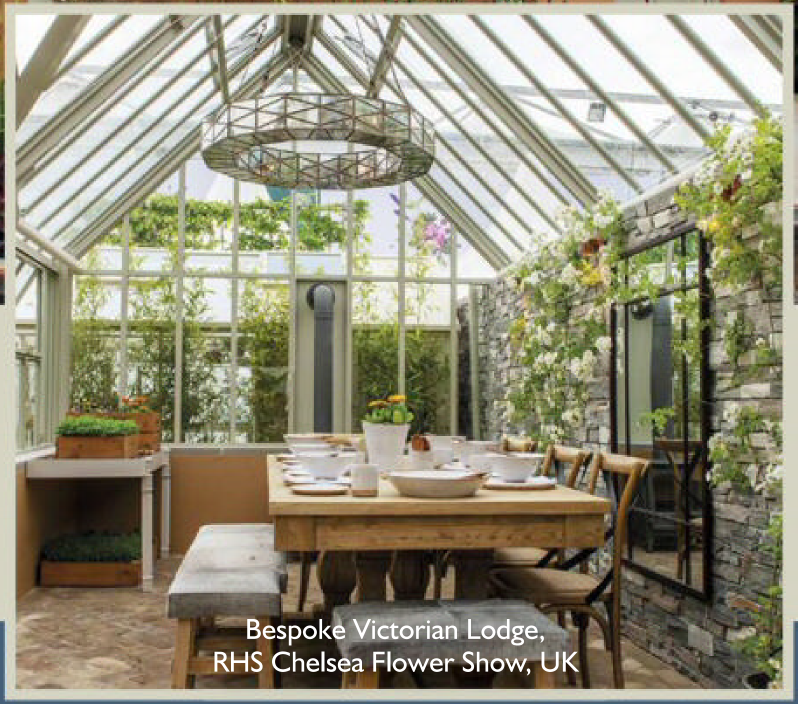

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